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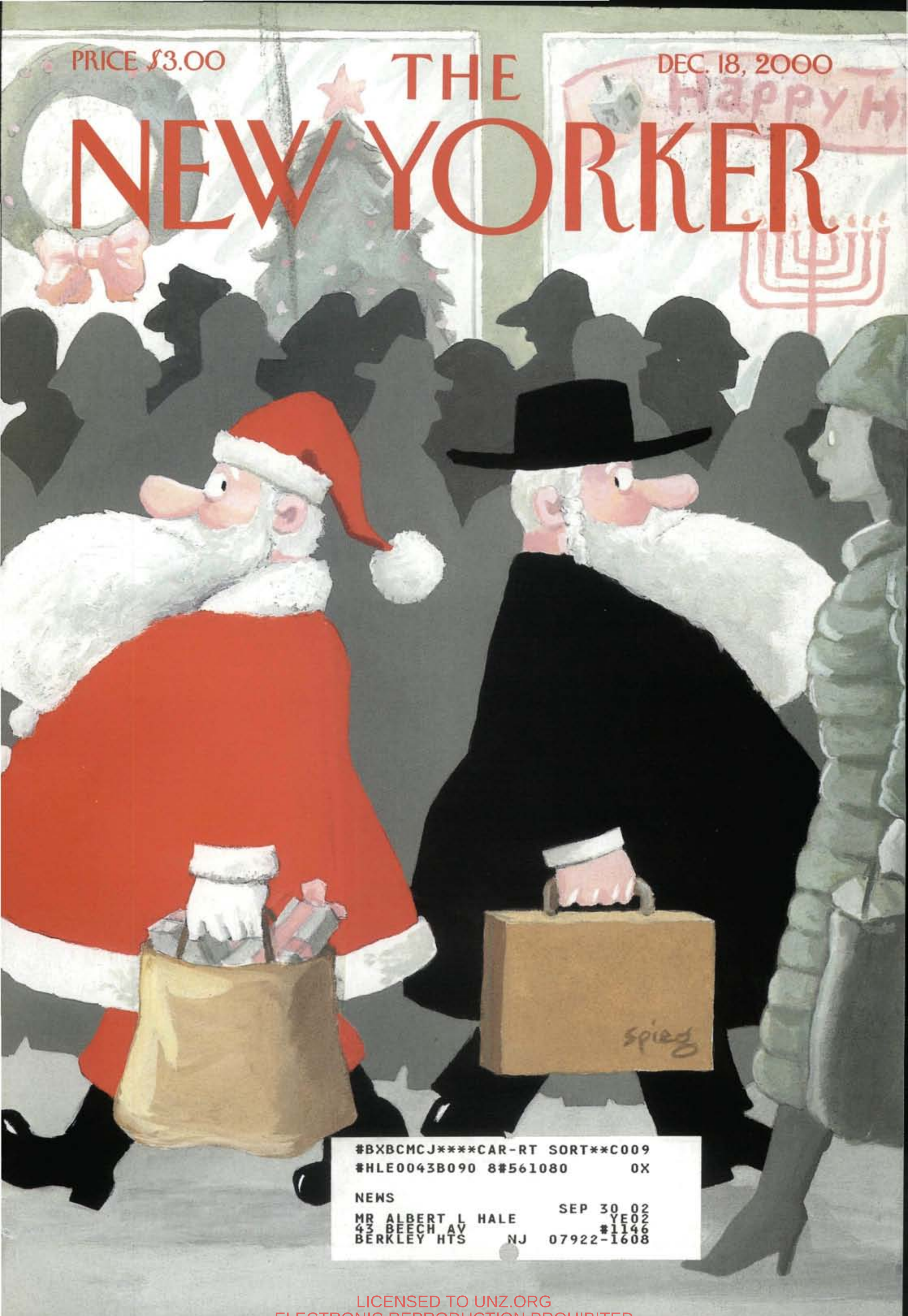
THE NEW YORKER

DEC. 18, 2000



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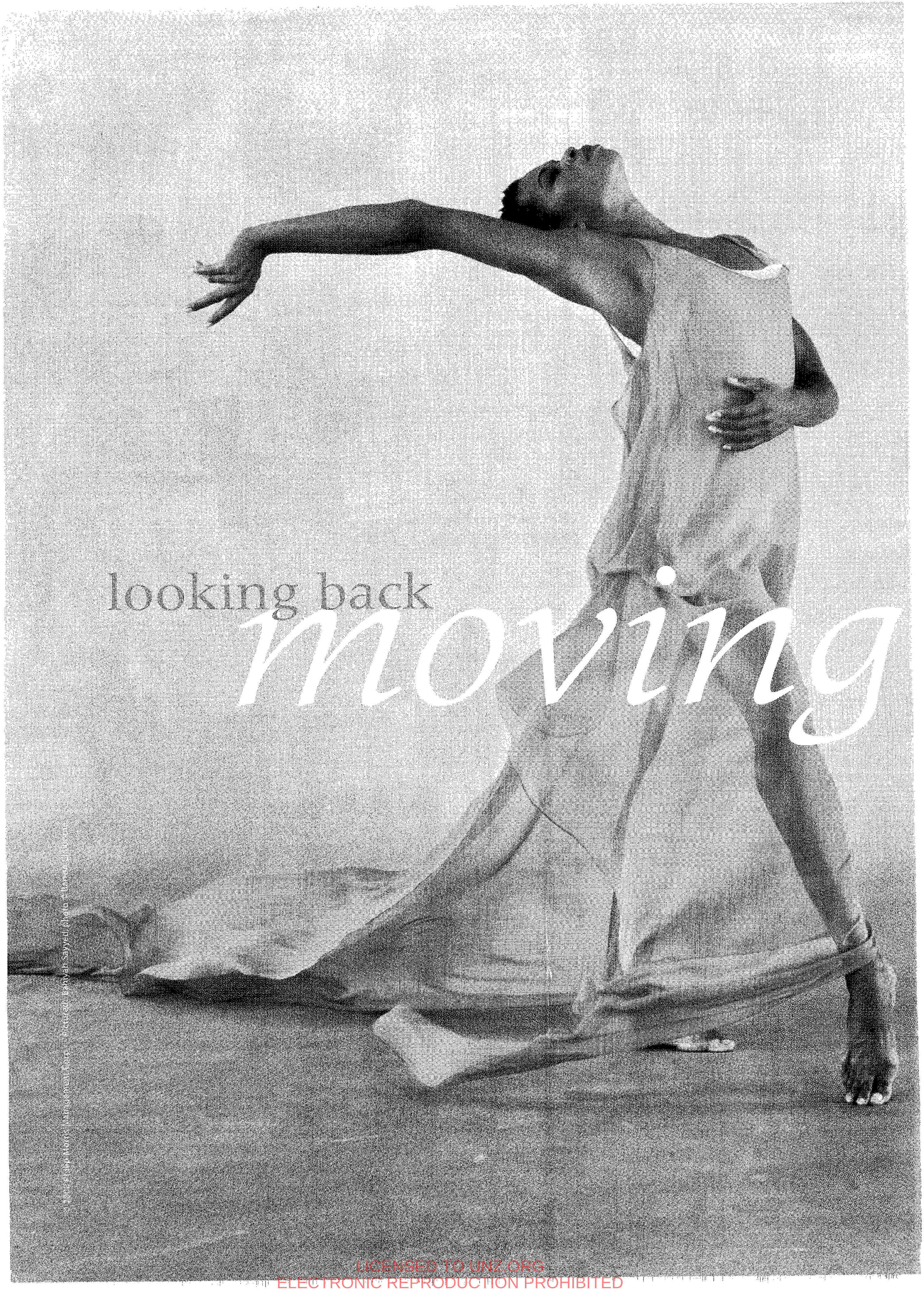
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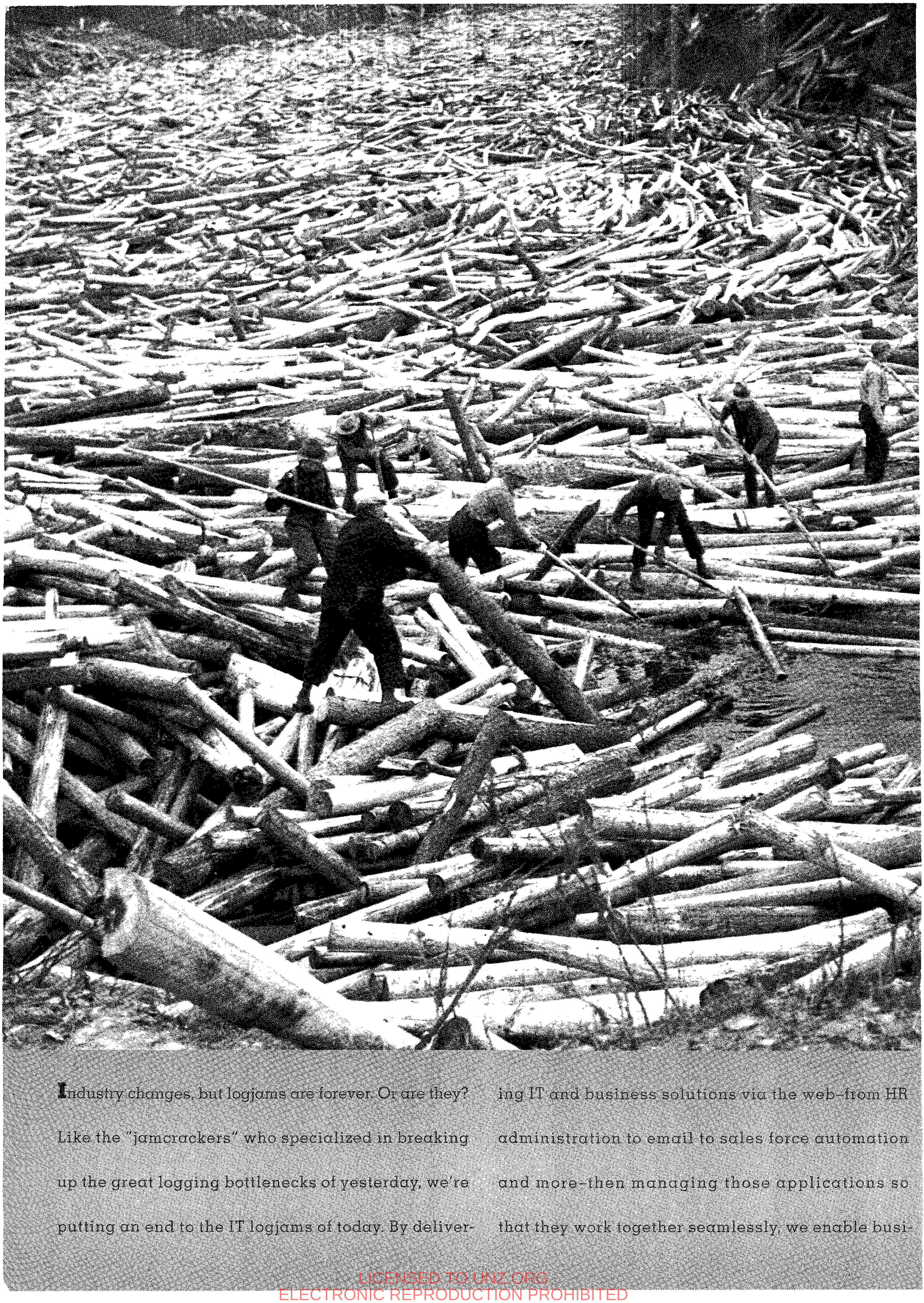

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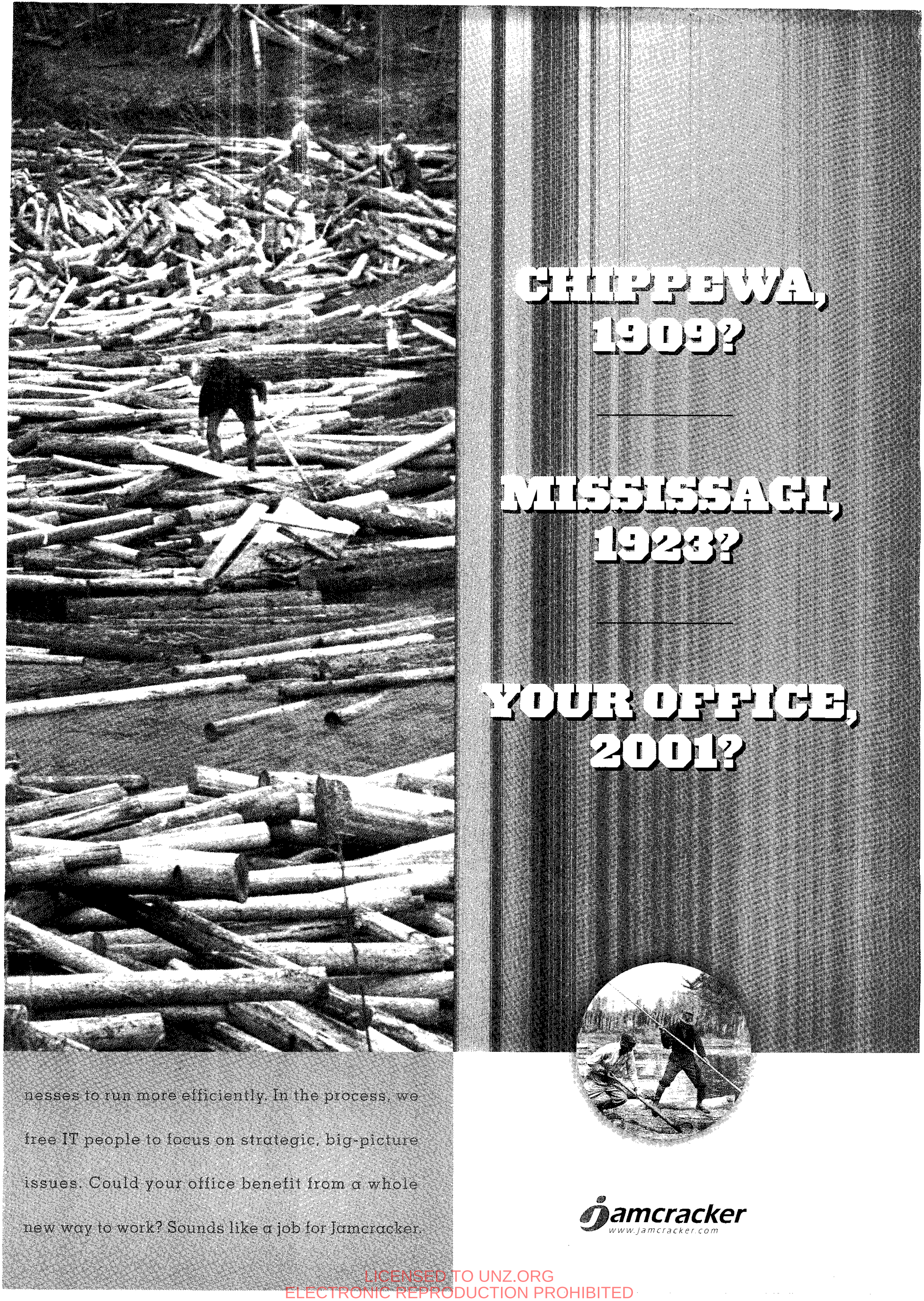

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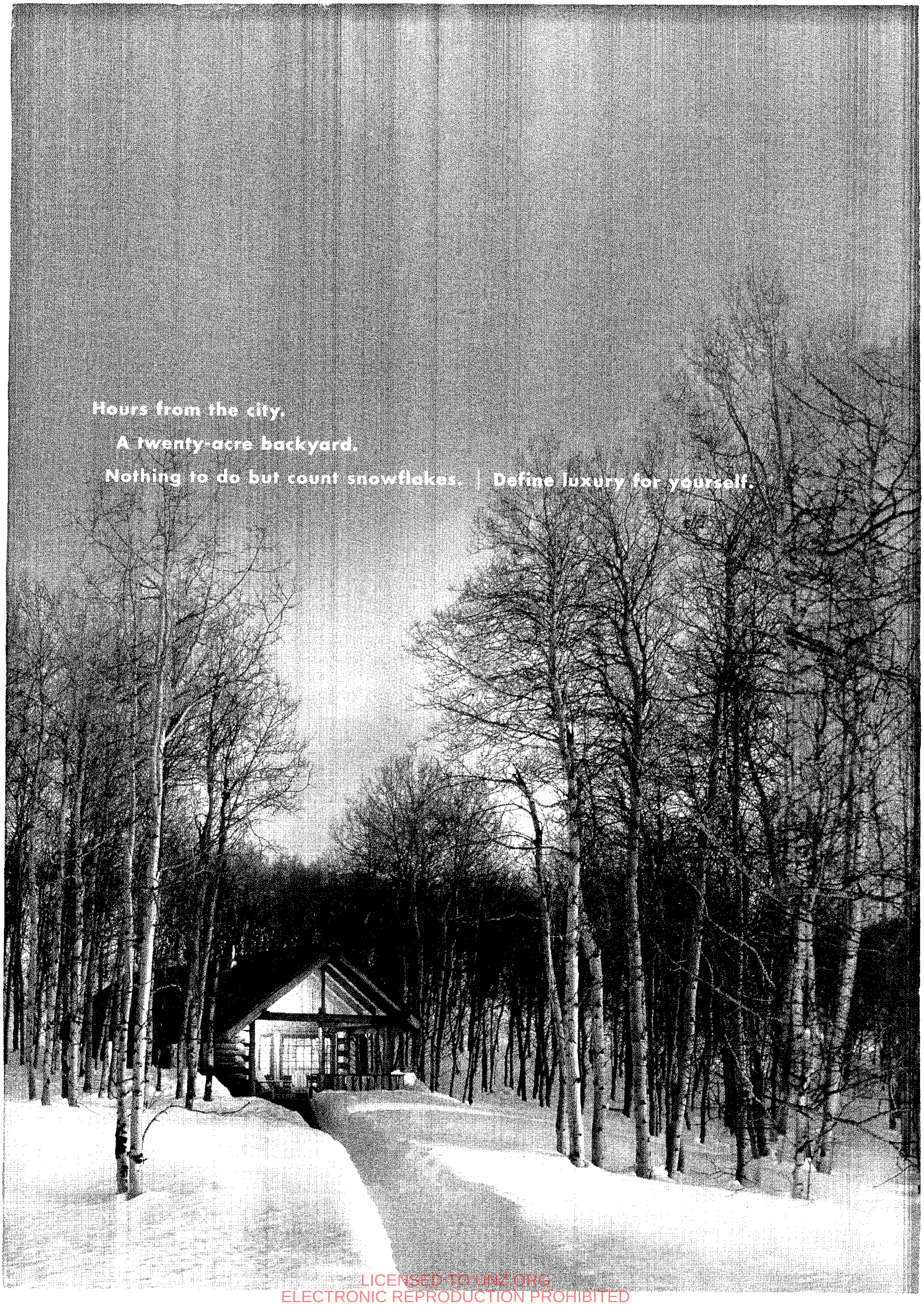
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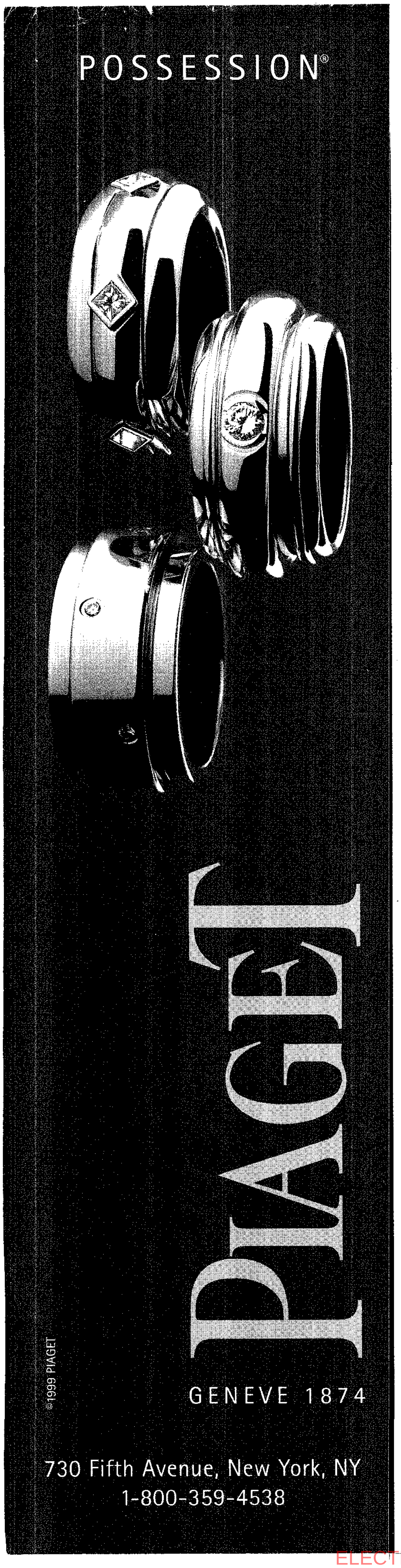


THE NEW YORKER

DECEMBER 18, 2000

14 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

41 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
The battle of Florida; birth of an angry man; a huge hug.

Nicholas Lemann 46 THE POLITICAL SCENE
The Empathy Defense
A university's bid to save affirmative action.

Paul Rudnick 52 SHOUTS & MURMURS
Profiles in Common Sense

Michael Specter 54 LETTER FROM TBILISI
Rainy Days in Georgia
Eduard Shevardnadze has troubles at home.

Barry Werth 64 A REPORTER AT LARGE
A Marine's Private War
A colonel investigates his daughter's death.

Edward Gorey 70 EASEL
Noël

Douglas Preston 78 LETTER FROM FLORENCE
The Madonna Puzzle
Searching for Masaccio's lost paintings.

William Trevor 86 FICTION
"Traditions"

THE CRITICS

Anthony Lane 94 A CRITIC AT LARGE
A Luis Buñuel retrospective at MOMA.

John Lahr 100 THE THEATRE
Peter Brook's "The Tragedy of Hamlet."

Alex Ross 102 MUSICAL EVENTS
X piano.

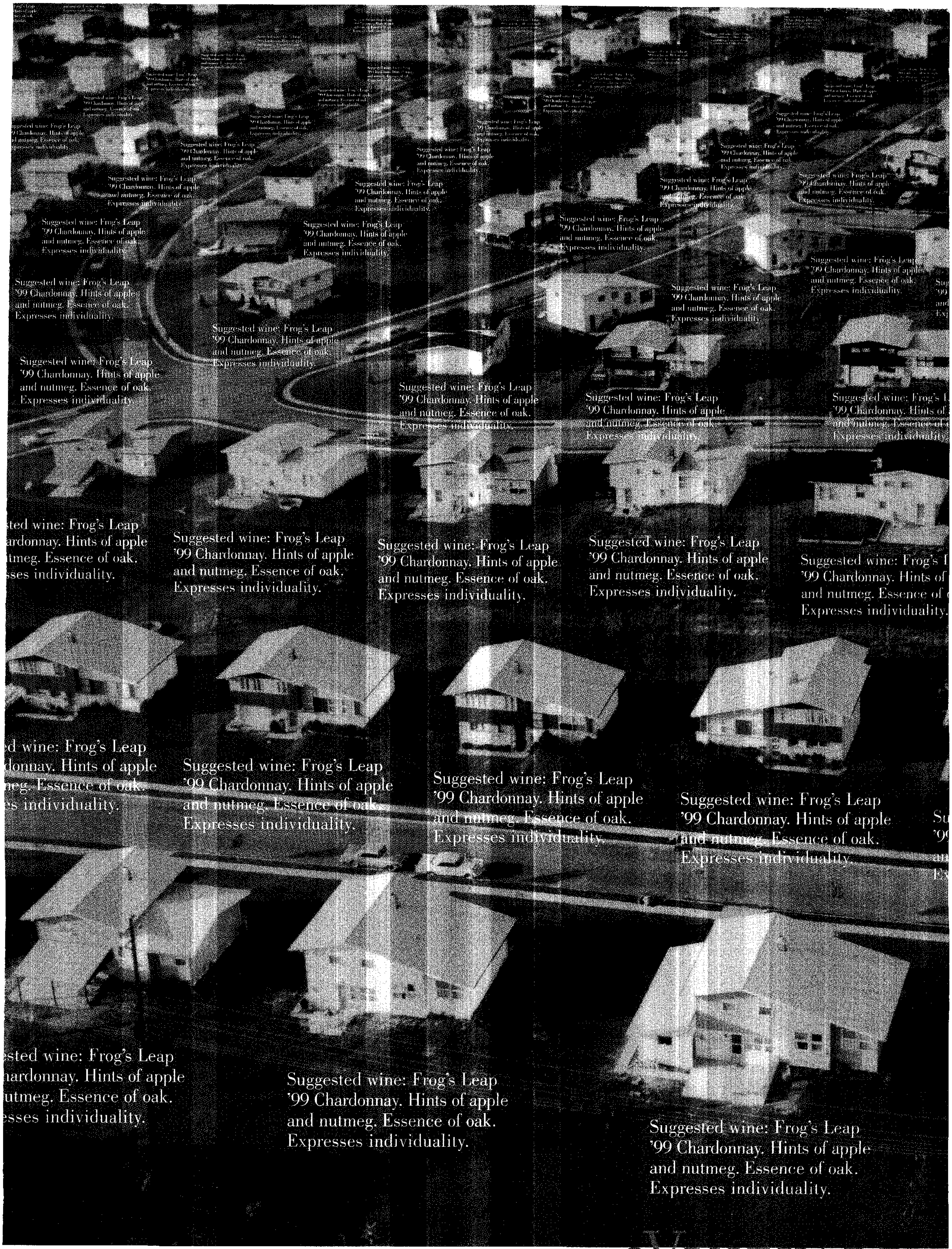
106 Books from Our Pages

David Denby 108 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"Cast Away," "You Can Count On Me."

POEMS

Anthony Walton 48 "Gwendolyn Brooks"
Joseph Brodsky 69 "Nativity Poem"
Joseph Brodsky 72 "Flight to Egypt"

COVER *"'Twas the Night Before Hanukkah," by Art Spiegelman* THE BACK PAGE *"Renovation of Daimler Chrysler Building Almost Complete," by Bruce McCall* DRAWINGS *Jack Ziegler, Victoria Roberts, Donald Reilly, Michael Maslin, Michael Crawford, William Hamilton, Leo Cullum, Danny Shanahan, Alex Gregory, Roz Chast, Charles Barsotti, Mick Stevens, Matthew Diffee, Robert Mankoff, Nick Downes, Pat Byrnes, P. C. Vey*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Fidelity Rep: Oh, yes. David's been with us for close to 30 years.

Investor: Well, he's a gem. He really is. He's the one that got us started.

Fidelity Rep: He's a very good man.

Investor: And Mr. Peter Lynch. We followed his principles faithfully.

Fidelity Rep: Many people have. But not everyone calls.

Investor: Well, I just want you to know that we feel very fortunate.

Fidelity Rep: Thank you.

Investor: No. Thank you!

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CONTRIBUTORS

Barry Werth ("A Marine's Private War," p. 64) is the author of "Damages." His new book, "The Scarlet Professor," will be published in April. It grew out of an article that appeared in the magazine in October, 1998.

Douglas Preston ("The Madonna Puzzle," p. 78) is writing a murder mystery based on the life of Masaccio.

Paul Rudnick (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 52) is a novelist and playwright. He is working on a new play called "Valhalla."

Michael Specter ("Rainy Days in Georgia," p. 54) is a Rome-based correspondent for the magazine.

Jessica Wynne (Photograph, p. 65) is at work on a series of photographs of high-school wrestlers.

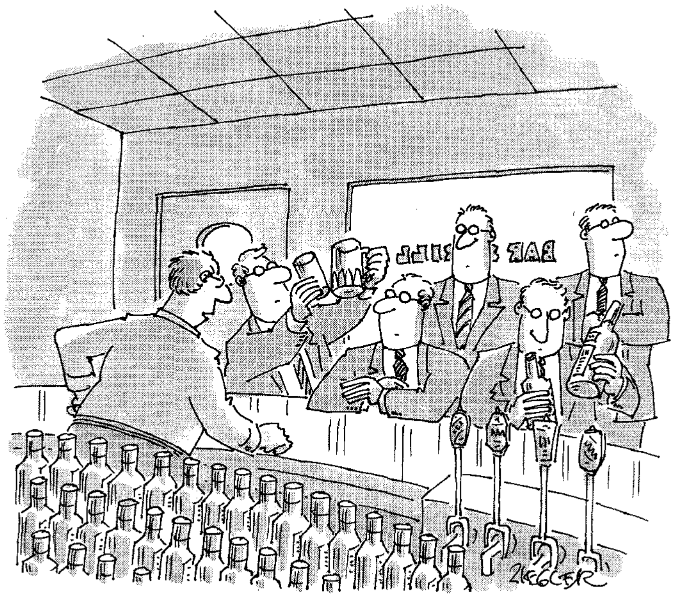
Nicholas Lemann ("The Empathy Defense," p. 46) is a staff writer. His most recent book, "The Big Test," has just come out in paperback.

William Trevor (Fiction, p. 86) has published fourteen novels, including "Death in Summer," and ten collections of short stories.

Anthony Walton (Poem, p. 48) is the co-editor, with Michael Harper, of "The Vintage Book of African American Poetry."

Edward Gorey (Easel, p. 70), who died earlier this year, wrote and illustrated more than a hundred books.

Bruce McCall (The Back Page, p. 110), a contributor since 1979, has just finished a book about dream cars. ♦



"I hardly think a transition team is necessary, Ed, in order to switch from beer to Scotch."

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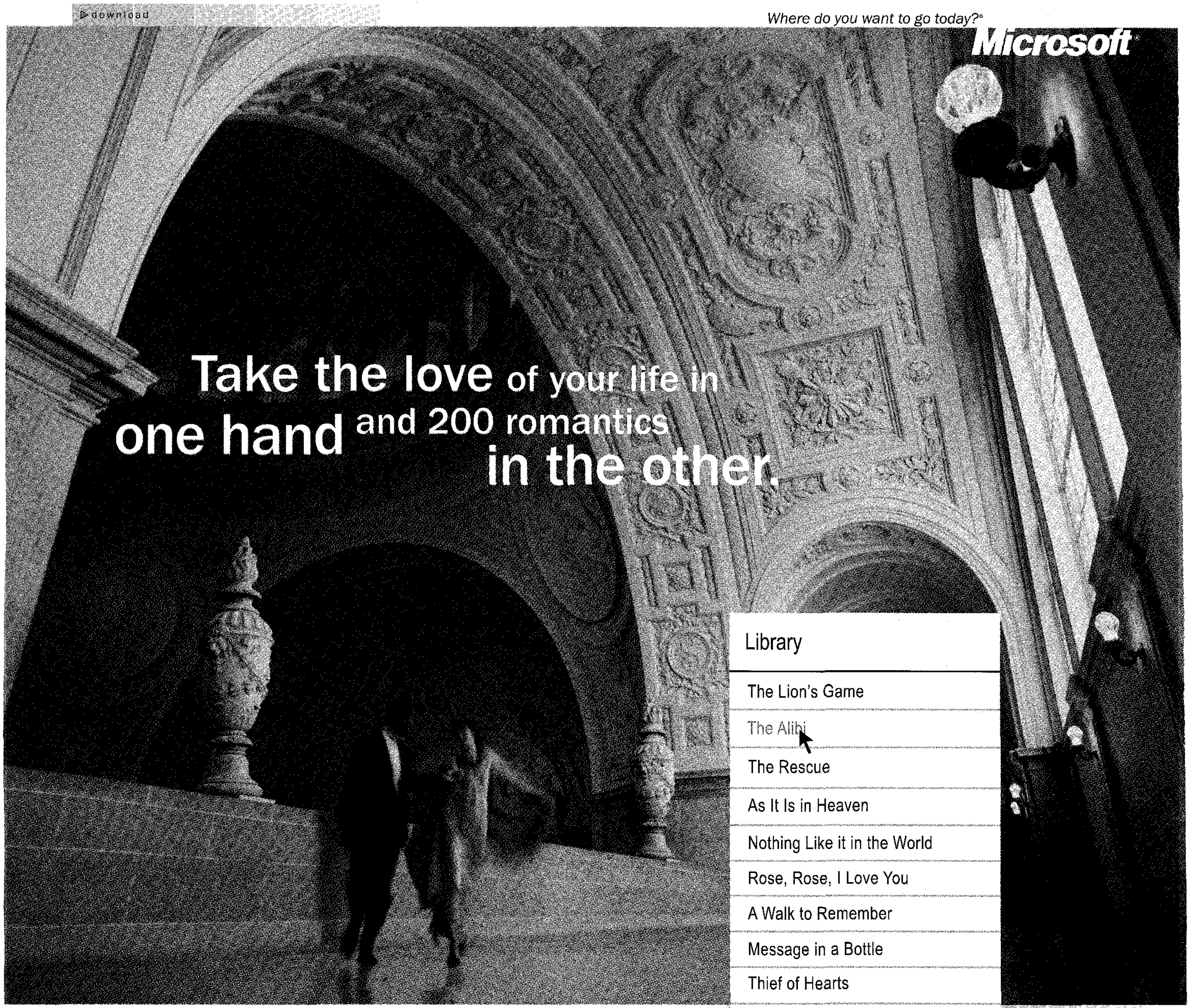
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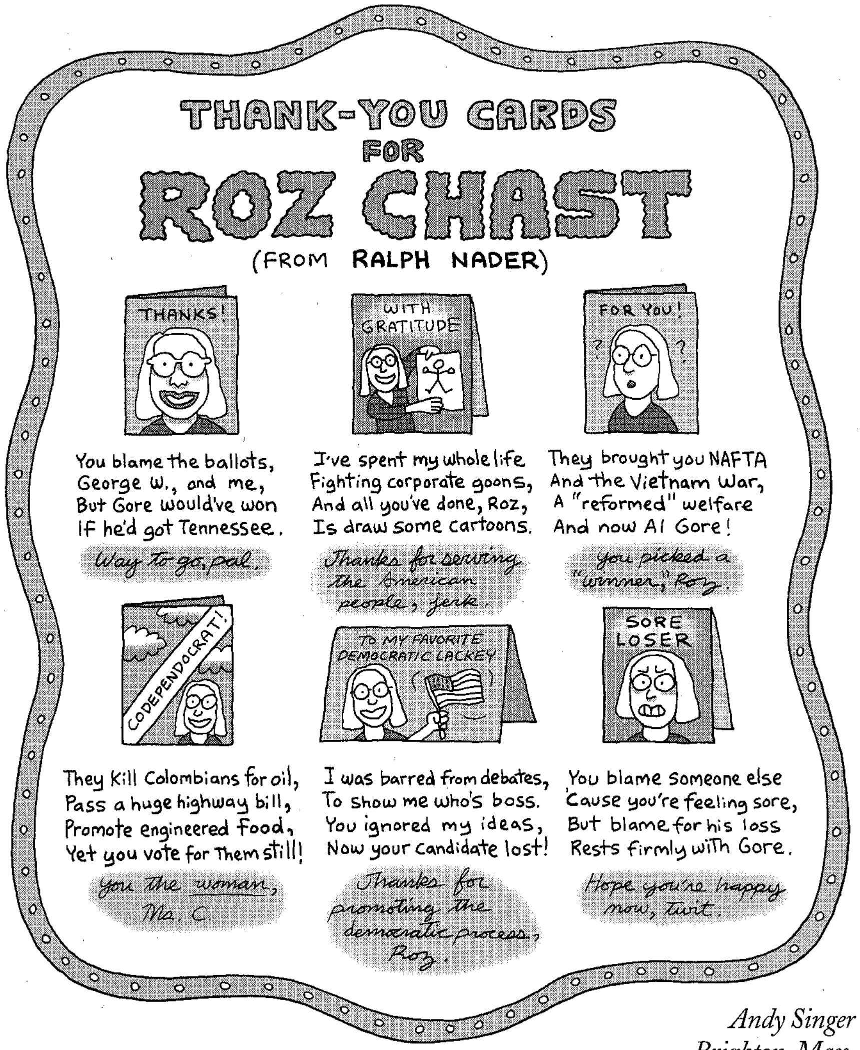
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THANKS!
You blame the ballots, George W., and me, But Gore would've won If he'd got Tennessee.
Way to go, pal.
WITH GRATITUDE
I've spent my whole life Fighting corporate goons, And all you've done, Roz, Is draw some cartoons.
Thanks for serving the American people, jerk.
FOR YOU!
? ?
They brought you NAFTA And the Vietnam War, A "reformed" welfare And now Al Gore!
You picked a "winner," Roz.
CODEPENDOCRAT!
They kill Colombians for oil, Pass a huge highway bill, Promote engineered food, Yet you vote for them still!
You the woman, Ms. C.
TO MY FAVORITE DEMOCRATIC LACKEY
I was barred from debates, To show me who's boss. You ignored my ideas, Now your candidate lost!
Thanks for promoting the democratic process, Roz.
SORE LOSER
You blame someone else 'Cause you're feeling sore, But blame for his loss Rests firmly with Gore.
Hope you're happy now, twit.

Andy Singer
Brighton, Mass.

ROZ'S RAIDERS

I'm grateful to Roz Chast for having the guts to publish such a pointed cartoon about Ralph Nader and his baleful influence on this election (The Back Page, December 4th). One problem with the immensely interesting situation in Florida is that it has taken the heat off Ralph.

Ann Bassetti
Seattle, Wash.

ANDY LOGAN'S AMBITION

I was sad to read of Andy Logan's passing (The Talk of the Town, December 4th). Sometime around 1950, when I was a student at Swarthmore College, her alma mater, she came back to talk to us about writing for *The New Yorker*. As with many things I heard in college, I don't remember the details of her speech, but I do remember Andy Logan, her enthusiasm for the magazine, her joy at working there, and a story she told about herself. When she went to interview for the job, she said, she proposed that she might start at the bottom, by writing the little gag lines that followed amusing quotes used to fill space at the end of articles. "Oh," she was told, "we have a Mr. E. B. White who writes those."

Woodlief Thomas, Jr.
Spencerport, N.Y.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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			13	14	15	16
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CAT'S PAW
While touring the monuments of New York City, four women lament the effects of men on their lives, in a new play by Mac Wellman. Previews begin Dec. 15. (Soho Rep, 46 Walker St. 479-7979.)

MENOPAUSAL GENTLEMAN
Peggy Shaw gives an encore performance of her one-woman lounge act, about being fifty-three and passing for a thirty-five-year-old man. Dec. 14-16 at 7:30 and Dec. 17 at 3 and 7:30. Continues through Dec. 22. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

PETE 'N' KEELY
A pair of singing stars, formerly a married duo, are reunited on a television variety show in 1968, in a musical comedy by James Hindman. With sets by Ray Klausen and costumes by Bob Mackie. Two previews on Dec. 13. Opens Dec. 14 at 7:30. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

THE WAX
A philosophical sex farce by Kathleen Tolan, in which a group of middle-aged friends reunites for a wedding at a seaside hotel. The cast includes Frank Wood, Laura Esterman, Mary Testa, Lola Pashalinski, and David Greenspan. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AMERICAN RHAPSODY
KT Sullivan and Mark Nadler star in a musical revue celebrating the works of George Gershwin. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 239-6200.)

BAAL
Bertolt Brecht's first play, produced by Jim Simpson and his lively Bat Theatre Company. The script suffers from many first-play problems, but it clearly presents several of Brecht's preoccupations, and Michael J. X. Gladis, as Baal, is provocative from the first word he speaks. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-2407. Closes Dec. 16.)

BETRAYAL
A revival of Harold Pinter's bleak 1978 comedy of manners about the blithe treachery of adultery and the thousand little lies that can make and break a friendship. Juliette Binoche, inexplicably, stars as a publisher's wife who has had a long affair with her husband's best friend, a literary agent. Binoche can do happy, she can do sad, but she brings no definition, no specificity, to her role. Her words, and her silences, speak not volumes but leaflets. Liev Schreiber, as her lover, and John Slattery, as her husband, do better with their parts—particularly Slattery, who combines emotional nakedness with reserve to portray the terribly comic aspects of trauma. Draggily directed by David Leveaux. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/27/00.) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-9393.)

BILLY CONNOLLY: ERECT FOR 30 YEARS
The British comic lets loose his free-form monologues at the Westbeth Theatre Center. (151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT
A staged version of the Fassbinder film about a lesbian love affair, adapted by Barbara Saurman and Ian Belton. (Henry Miller Theatre, 124 W. 43rd St. 279-4200.)

BOOK OF THE DEAD: SECOND AVENUE
John Moran's first techno-opera in five years, set in ancient Egypt and on New York City's Second Avenue, doesn't pack quite the same punch that his earlier works did. Despite the fact that the scenes and allegories are slow to mesh, Moran's method—he uses recorded sounds and voices to build his otherworldly environments—is strange, powerful, and unlike anything else you'll see in the theatre today. There's no describing it: you just have to go. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Dec. 17.)

A CHILD'S GARDEN
From the Melting Pot Theatre, a musical based on Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses." With music by Louis Rosen, who co-wrote the book with Arthur Perlman and Charlotte Maier. (Theatre 3, at 311 W. 43rd St. 279-4200.)

COBB
In his brilliantly constructed play about baseball's greatest hitter and most brutal bully, Lee Blessing places three actors (Michael Cullen, Matt Mabe, and Michael Sabatino) onstage together to portray Tyrus Raymond Cobb; they reminisce from the afterlife and interact with each other at various stages in Cobb's professional and personal career. For Cobb, baseball was a place to stake kingship, but here he's haunted by a forgotten legend, Negro Leaguer and Hall of Famer Oscar Charlston, who forces Cobb to confront the social injustices he sheepishly dodged during his lifetime, denying himself a chance at true greatness. (Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

COMIC POTENTIAL
Or not. Alan Ayckbourn's futuristic farce about an android actress (Janie Dee) who becomes plagued by human feelings for an idealistic young screenwriter might have had the potential to be funny forty years ago, but today it's sub-sitcom pap. Even as a vehicle for the talents of the gravel-voiced British actress Dee, it falls embarrassingly short, despite some amusing moments. It also smacks of misogyny: Dee's programmable "actoid" is the sole woman in the show whose emotional makeup appeals to the men; her only competition is a pair of smart but dismissive lesbians and a desperate, angry, over-the-hill man-eater. Har. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Dec. 31.)

CRAVE
Deborah Harry stars in the late British playwright Sarah Kane's examination of the dark side of human relationships. (Axis, 1 Sheridan Sq. 807-9300. Closes Dec. 28.)

THE DINNER PARTY
Neil Simon's new comedy is set in an opulent restaurant in Paris, and his six characters—three divorced couples—are not the usual Simon-Americans of his "Suite" plays. They are French, or are meant to be. Still, the play is essentially traditional fare; the running, or limping, gags are in ready supply, and the secondhand shtick, often in the form of aeons-old alimony jokes, flows freely along this Boulevard of Broken Marriages. (11/6/00) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

DOWN THE GARDEN PATHS
Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson lead the cast in a new four-couple comedy by Anne Meara. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

FERMAT'S LAST TANGO
Pythagoras, Newton, Euclid, and Gauss are characters in a mathematical musical by Joanne Sydney Lessner and Joshua Rosenblum, staged by the York Theatre Company. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 239-6200.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
The latest edition of Gerard Alessandrini's ongoing musical satire of the players and the plays along the Great White Way. (Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.)

FOUR GUYS NAMED JOSÉ . . . AND UNA MUJER NAMED MARIA
This crowd-pleasing, crayon-colored revue of Latin song and dance is knowingly broad and hammy. But the talented cast sends up the singers and songs that helped create Latin stereotypes and delivers the

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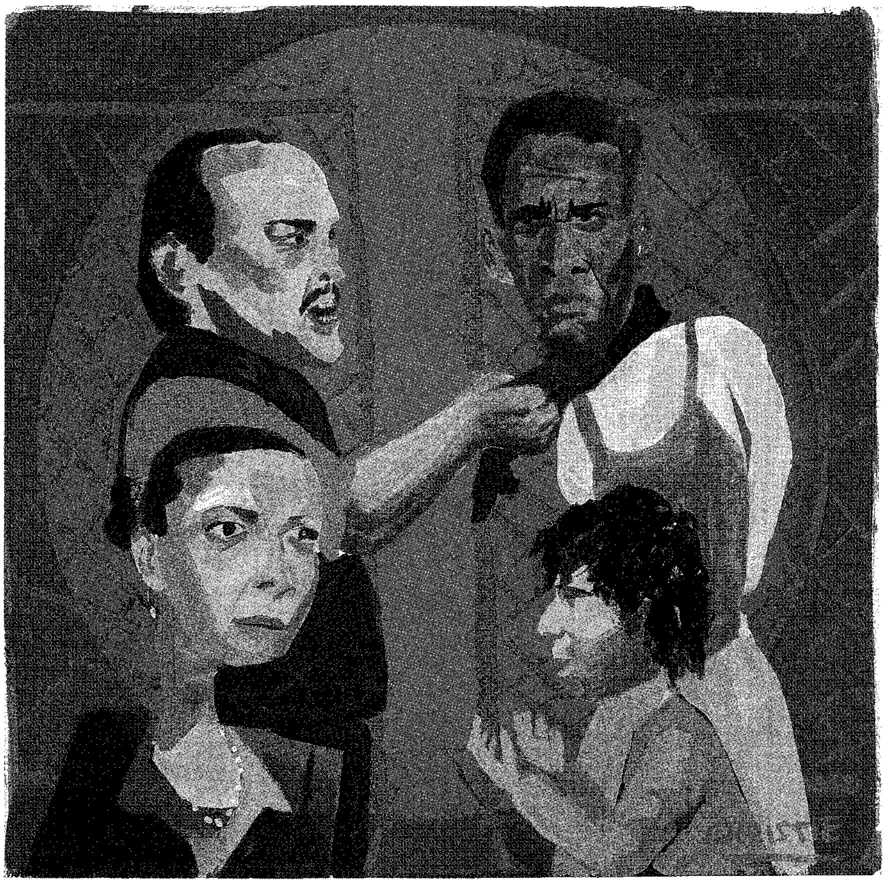
remaining material—dance songs, songs of nostalgia for one's homeland, songs of love, songs about women named Maria—with exuberant wit and affection. (Blue Angel, 323 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

THE FULL MONTY

The musical version of the 1997 movie, about a group of unemployed factory workers who try to earn some cash by stripping, is faithful to the original story—even though the locale has been shifted from the North of England to Buffalo. It has all the spirit and charm of the original but, as befits a Broadway production, on a much larger, pizzazzier scale. Instead of being touched, you're likely to be moved up out of your seat by the display of musical and choreographic bravura onstage. Early on, Terrence McNally's book and David Yazbek's songs strike notes of class consciousness and unemployment-related low male self-esteem a little too hard, but soon enough the show's winning good humor and inventiveness kick in, and if you don't find yourself laughing consistently (and tearing up occasionally), well, then, maybe you don't *deserve* to see six men prancing around in red G-strings. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)



"Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train," by Stephen Adly Guirgis, at the East 13th Street Theatre.

R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

GAME SHOW

The action of Bob Walton and Jeffrey Finn's "play" clumsily shifts from a trivia contest between audience volunteers to scripted, behind-the-scenes backstabbing between the producer (Cheryl Stern) and the host (Michael McGrath) of the show within the show. The drama that unfolds during the "commercial breaks" is flat, but the participatory sequences are surprisingly amusing, if only because they involve laughing at the contestants (at a recent show, a professional woman defined a "gynephobe" as a person who is afraid of giants). (45 Bleecker, at 45 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

GORE VIDAL'S THE BEST MAN

Gore Vidal's sophisticated, elegant, and damned entertaining 1960 play about the politics of politics, whose mots are as eerily accurate for Shrub and Al as they were, originally, for Adlai and Tricky Dick. (10/2/00) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

THE GOREY DETAILS

A musical inspired by the works of the author-illustrator Edward Gorey. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THE HOSTAGE

Brendan Behan's 1960 play is set in that year, a moment of relative peace in Ireland, and it raises the question of whether anyone other than a few fanatics really cared anymore about the country's entanglement with England. Forty years on, Behan's political views are still fresh, and the play itself is a fascinating mixture of tragedy and fun, like a good pub tale. The talented cast is directed by Charlotte Moore. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Dec. 31.)

THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA

The National Asian American Theatre Company is known for opening up the classics with all-Asian performances, and they've done it again with this stark, lovely, and evocative production. A fine cast and chorus perform the Spanish poet and playwright Federico García Lorca's 1935 drama, in which the widowed Bernarda imprisons her five daughters and orders them to mourn their stepfather for eight years. Directed by Chay Yew, who also adapted Lorca's text. (INTAR II, 508 W. 53rd St. 718-623-1672.)

JANE EYRE

The musical. Marla Schaffel is Jane; James Barbour is Rochester. With a book by John Caird and a score by Paul Gordon. Directed by Mr. Caird and Scott Schwartz. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

JESUS HOPPED THE 'A' TRAIN

A six-week encore run of Stephen Adly Guirgis's drama about the relationship between two convicts in protective custody at Riker's Island. Philip Seymour Hoffman is the director. (East 13th Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 31.)

JULIUS CAESAR

The British-American Aquila Theatre Company's modern-dress staging of Shakespeare's play. (Clark Studio Theatre, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 23.)

JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK

Even a spirited performance by Jim Nelson, as the feckless, braggart "paycock" of the title, can't get this otherwise flat Roundabout Theatre production of Sean O'Casey's 1924 tragicomedy off the ground. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900. Closes Dec. 23.)

KIKI AND HERB: JESUS WEPT

The cabaret duo also known as Justin Bond and Kenny Mellman, in their new Christmas show. (Fez, 380 Lafayette St. 533-2680.)

THE LAST OF THE THORNTONS

Horton Foote's new drama stars Hallie Foote, his daughter, as Alberta Thornton, the last living member of a powerful small-town Texas clan. Alberta's mental faculties are decaying at a nursing home; in the dayroom, the aging patients and their visitors (including Estelle Parsons) reminisce about family members we never get to meet. It's not a setup that makes for action or character development; the resulting experience is at times depressing and befuddling, but never really moving or poignant. (Signature Theatre Company, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

THE LIGHT OUTSIDE

From the Flea Theatre, a black domestic comedy by Kate Robin. (41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-2407. Closes Dec. 16.)

LIVING IN THE WIND

Cheryl Freeman and Chad L. Coleman portray married ex-slaves trying to rebuild their lives after the Civil War, in a romantic drama by Michael Bradford. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 31.)

LYPSINKA! THE BOXED SET

The star (a.k.a. John Epperson) makes her first concert appearance in seven years. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 307-4100. Closes Dec. 30.)

MAYBE BABY, IT'S YOU

Love in the big city, explained with many laughs by the show's accomplished writer-performers, Charlie Shanian and Shari Simpson. There's an undercurrent of sweetness and longing which makes the evening more than a series of skits. (Theatre at St. Luke's, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

MINT THEATRE COMPANY

Presenting a double bill of one-acts: Harley Granville-Barker's "Farewell to the Theatre" and George Kelley's "The Flattering Word." (311 W. 43rd St. 315-0231. Closes Dec. 17.)

OLD MONEY

A new play by Wendy Wasserstein, under the direction of Mark Brokaw. John Cullum, Mary Beth Hurt, and Dan Butler are in the cast. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

PRINCESS TURANDOT

Darko Tresnjak's new play was inspired by Gozzi's 1792 fable, the operas of Puccini and Busoni, "The Arabian Nights," and the films of Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 206-1515.)

PROOF

The Manhattan Theatre Club's staging of David Auburn's drama, starring Mary-Louise Parker, has reopened on Broadway. Daniel Sullivan is the director. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

RICHARD III

The Pearl Theatre Company's version of Shakespeare's play. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 505-9802. Closes Dec. 17.)

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW

Rather than a revival of Richard O'Brien's 1973 musical, Christopher Ashley's production is an unsexy and oddly earnest homage to the 1975 cult-movie adaptation. It plays to the already converted (who can dance the Time Warp with the help of a ten-dollar "participation bag" containing confetti, a light-up key chain, and toilet paper), but it offers the rest of the audience no sense of irony and no insight into why, or how, O'Brien's glam tribute to fifties horror movies became such a phenomenon. The only air of self-parody comes from the impish Dick Cavett; as the narrator, he gives the show a shot of vitality with his improvised standup shtick and, if you're lucky, his version of the Moonwalk. The rest of the casting is inspired (although Lea DeLaria and Joan Jett are sadly underused), but the performers can't

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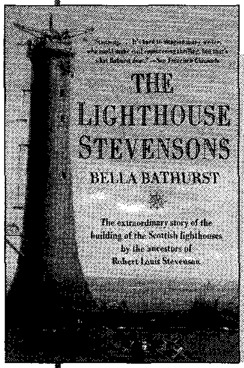
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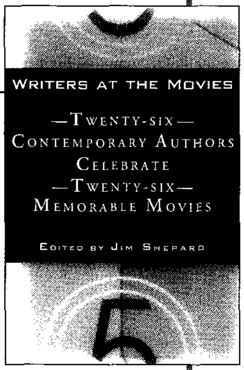
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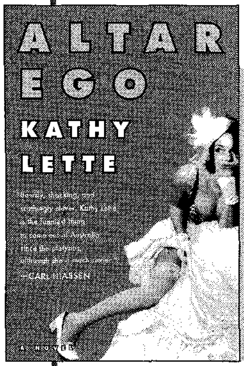

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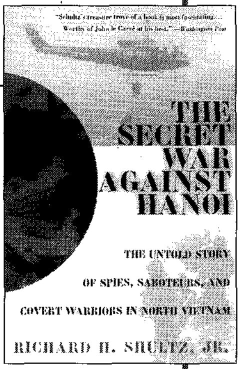
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really compete with their celluloid counterparts. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

SAVED OR DESTROYED
Rattlestick starts the season with a Harry Kondoleon festival, beginning with this previously unproduced comedy. (Rattlestick Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl. 206-1515.)

THE SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE
Lily Tomlin is back on Broadway in the one-woman, thirteen-character show written for her by her longtime collaborator, Jane Wagner, and what's not to love about that? Tomlin is terrific—moving, funny, and as lithe and vibrant as she was when she first performed the show here, fifteen years ago. If anything, her characterizations are better now: they're grittier and less tinged with whimsy. Wagner's observations are so trenchant that you can't help wishing that she had written some new, up-to-date characters for this production, but, as it is, this is a chance to see a remarkable life force in action. (11/27/00) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SECRET HISTORY
The latest installment in Ping Chong's "Undesirable Elements" series, in which he creates a script from interviews with his cast, chosen for their stories of cultural displacement. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 529-1557.)

SEUSSICAL
A new musical by the team of Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty which blends stories and characters from the books of Dr. Seuss. Frank Galati is the director. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

THE SYRINGA TREE
A tour-de-force solo drama, written by and starring South African native and first-time playwright Pamela Gien, who gives an extraordinary performance in all twenty-three roles. It's a love story, really, about the strong, lasting bond between a white girl and her black nanny in South Africa, which begins in 1965 and continues through the following twenty years of turbulent and violent upheavals over apartheid. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.)

TABLETOP
Rob Ackerman's real-time comedy, a behind-the-scenes look at television-commercial making. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Charles Busch's satire of New York intellectual angst, staged by Manhattan Theatre Club, has moved to Broadway. Linda Lavin, Tony Roberts, and Michele Lee star. Lynne Meadow is the director. (3/20/00) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

TALLULAH HALLELUJAH!
Tovah Feldshuh's engaging portrait of Tallulah Bankhead is set in 1956, at a U.S.O. benefit, where the stage-and-screen siren (played by Feldshuh) regales the audience with the lowdown on her life, several marvellous standards, and a bunch of charmingly dirty limericks. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

THEATRE FOR THE NEW CITY
Dec. 13-15 at 8 and Dec. 16-17 at 3 and 8: "The Heathen Nativity," from Vermont's Bread and Puppet Theatre. Through Dec. 23. ♦ Dec. 13-16 at 8:30: "Brecht on Brecht," an Irondale Ensemble production featuring excerpts from the playwright's poetry, essays, and plays. Through Dec. 23. ♦ Dec. 13-17 at 8: "Spanish Roulette," a new play by Willie Torres, about Puerto Rican life in Manhattan. ♦ Dec. 17 at 2 and 4: "Times Square Angel," a staged reading by Charles Busch ("The Tale of the Allergist's Wife") of his 1984 cult-classic Christmas show. (155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109.)

TINY ALICE
Edward Albee loaded a lot of ideas into his mysterious 1964 drama—examinations of organized religion, capitalism, spiritual and sexual ecstasy, the nature of human existence in relation to God and reality—and the action moves along smoothly and thrillingly, up to a point. While the play ultimately leaves you scratching your head, Albee's

way with language and stagecraft is so witty and acute that, like life, it's enjoyable as long as you don't think about it too much. Second Stage's fine revival—which includes some terrific performances, along with appropriately imposing set, light, and sound design—almost makes you forgive the final scene's overheated crucifixion allegory, in which the thundering heartbeat of an unknown power literally rattles the theatre. (307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

THE UNEXPECTED MAN
There are only two actors in this small gem by Yasmina Reza, the author of "Art," but they are not just any two—they are Alan Bates and the magnificent Eileen Atkins, who are sharing a compartment on a Paris-to-Frankfurt train. He is a writer, and she, unbeknownst to him, is his ideal reader; their private reflections weave around and play off each other until the two passengers finally address each other directly. Reza's artfulness in presenting their thoughts—his discontent, her insightful analysis of his books and rueful reminiscences of friendships—makes this a very grownup play about separateness and connection, about the art of life. Directed by Matthew Warchus. (11/6/00) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 31.)

WHAT THE BUTLER SAW
It's a treat to see Chloë Sevigny onstage, even in the New Group's inert production of Joe Orton's bawdy 1969 sex farce. The last few moments—when cases of mistaken identity have been solved and all sets of clothing have been returned to their rightful owners—are sublime, but the road that leads to them is rather rocky. The director Scott Elliot's pacing is off, and his actors have a difficult time muscling the Wildean dialogue. There are laughs to be had here; they just come paired with groans. (Theatre at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 31.)

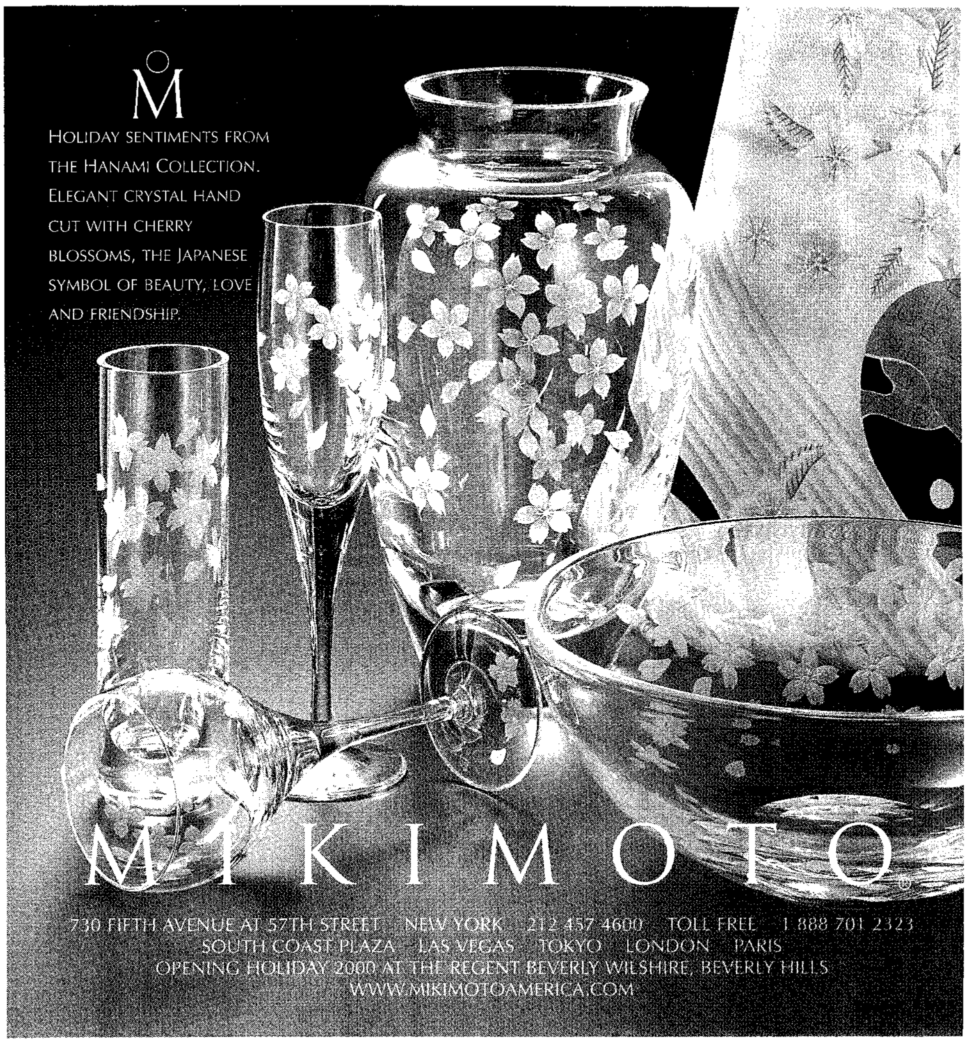
DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
The company returns with "The Nutcracker." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 870-5570. Dec. 13-14 and Dec. 19 at 6, Dec. 15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 17 at 1 and 5.)

ALVIN AILEY
Dec. 13 at 8: "Memoria," "Cry," "Streams," and "Phases." ♦ Dec. 14 at 8: "Night Creature," "Pas de Duke," "The River," and "Revelations." ♦ Dec. 15 at 8: "Divining," "Chocolate Sessions," "Double Exposure," and "Grace." ♦ Dec. 16 at 2: A medley of Ailey classics that includes "Revelations." ♦ Dec. 16 at 8: "Divining," "Chocolate Sessions," "After Eden," and "Phases." ♦ Dec. 17 at 3: "Streams," "Sweet Bitter Love," "Memoria," and "Hymn." ♦ Dec. 19 at 8: "Double Exposure," "Following the Subtle Current Upstream," and "Phases." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Dec. 31.)

BALLET HISPANICO
New York City's eleven-member Ballet Hispanico has the whole Spanish-speaking world to choose from (the company commissions only works that take on aspects of Hispanic life), so it's a big mystery why the troupe opts for Fosse's Broadway or the aerobo-romantic maneuvers of contemporary ballet as often as it does. Still, the current program, of two premières and three repertory works, is also full of small and beautiful secrets, like the passage in the Spanish choreographer Ramón Oller's new piece, "Eyes of the Soul," in which the women make ocean waves of their taut flamenco arms, and then dive in, while the men, travelling in low, loose arabesques, hands pinned back, lead with heads and shoulders, like coasting seals. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 12-15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 17 at 2 and 7:30.)

"DIVINE COMEDY"
The six-member Rosa Mei Company performs a seventy-five-minute version of Dante's poem, in collaboration with Reiko Kawashima, who created the architectural, samurai-like costumes, and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Severn Clay, who designed the set and lighting. Clay also came up with the idea of positioning the audience at both ends of St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, so they, too, become part of the spectacle, in Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. (Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Dec. 14-17 at 8:30.)

"FOUR FRUITS"
Karinne Keithley choreographs a full-length work for Apricot, Plum, Cherry, and Orange (Banana appears briefly, in self-defense), set to a score of Hawaiian serenades, Béla Bartók, Swedish dub, and movie remixes, among other strains. (Surf Reality, 172 Allen St. 358-3908. Dec. 14-16 at 10.)

"BIRDCALLS"
The Lise Brenner Company performs four works, including "And I Will See You There Always," a duet for tall woman and much shorter man, and the title piece, inspired in part by midwinter on the Jersey shore. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 334-7479. Dec. 14-17 at 8.)

"HIGHER GROUND"
Patrick Swayze hosts an evening of new works by Dwight Rhoden for the Complexions dance company, founded by the choreographer and Desmond Richardson. The troupe is joined by Gus Solomons, Jr., and Carmen De Lavallade. (Hudson Theatre, 145 W. 44th St. 479-0845. Dec. 17 at 8.)

"NEITHER"
An intimate, hour-long work by Doug Varone and Dancers leads the company through various rooms of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. (90 Orchard St. 800-965-4827. Dec. 12-16 at 7:30 and 9:30 and Dec. 17 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
In case you missed this show last week, nineteen-twenties New Orleans and its most glorious scion, Louis Armstrong, are celebrated again. Joining the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and its leader, Wynton Marsalis, are such Crescent City natives as the trombonist Lucien Barbarin and the guitarist and banjo player Don Vappie, along with the brilliant clarinettist Bob Wilber, who's been assimilating the musical strains of the Big Easy since he was a lad in nineteen-forties Westchester. And if you can't make it to this performance, don't worry. It's being broadcast nationwide live on PBS. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 13 at 8.)

CYPRESS HILL
This cannabis-friendly Los Angeles-based hip-hop trio (B-Real, Sen Dog, and Muggs) has had a busy year. The band is currently promoting two new records, the double CD "Skull & Bones" and "Live at the Fillmore." The second release is a workmanlike chronicle of the group's laid-back rhyming, but the studio album is a major departure: "Skull & Bones" includes a hip-hop disk and a straight-faced Limp Bizkit-flavored metal disk. The band might have been better served by fusing the two directions into a single brilliant record, but there are enough inspired moments on each half to make the whole project worthwhile. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Dec. 14 at 8.)

"SALUTE TO BUCKY"
Jazz guitarists come and go, usually in a flurry of flying fingers, but **Bucky Pizzarelli** has been with us for nearly six decades. A meticulous craftsman and elegant stylist, Pizzarelli is a living link to such guitar pioneers as Django Reinhardt, George Van Eps, and George Barnes; there's not a standard or swing tune his seven-string instrument hasn't spun into pure gold. The guitarists **Howard Alden, Gene Bertoncini,** and **Frank Vignola** and the saxophonists **Frank Wess** and **Ken Peplowski** join Pizzarelli for this show. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Dec. 14 at 8.)

WINTER SOLSTICE
The Brazilian singer Luciana Souza, the percussionist Arto Tuncboyaciyan, and other musicians help Paul Winter mark the changing of the seasons.

(Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Dec. 14-15 at 7:30 and Dec. 16 at 2 and 7:30.)

THE OFFSPRING

These Orange County skateboard thrashers have a knack for contagious, skillfully arranged songs with funny, self-deprecating wordplay. They're on tour supporting their latest disk, "Conspiracy of One," which débuted at No. 9 on the Billboard 200 chart, thanks in part to the irresistible single "Original Prankster." (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Dec. 17-18 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOTTOM LINE

15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Dec. 15: The "Downtown Messiah." The former Bongos front man **Richard Barone,** the guitarist **Gary Lucas,** the singer **Jane Siberry,** and many others offer an abbreviated recital of Handel's masterpiece. The Idiot's Delight disk jockey **Vin Scelsa** is the narrator.

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Dec. 13: **Nina Gordon.** Back in 1994, when Veruca Salt released its first album, "American Thighs," Gordon and her partner Louise Post were the coolest pair of female rockers since Heart's Ann and Nancy Wilson. Despite a great single, "Seether," Veruca Salt never really caught on, and the band split up after its second full-length album. The hard-hitting Post reformed Veruca Salt this year, but the more cerebral Gordon has gone solo. On her début, "Tonight and the Rest of My Life," Gordon's nifty writing suggests that the parts of her old group were greater than the whole. With **Paloalto,** an up-and-coming Los Angles rock-and-roll band. Dec. 15: **Blonde Redhead,** a trio that takes its name from a song by the No Wave group DNA. These three neo-immigrant New Yorkers (one is from Japan, and the other two are twin brothers from Italy) eschew the bass for a noisy guitar-and-drum approach that has, inevitably, been compared to early Sonic Youth. But on their latest album, "Melody of Certain Damaged Lemons," the still bassless sound veers smartly, and rewardingly, toward pop.

BROWNIES

169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Dec. 16: A worthwhile triple bill. **Radio 4** does a fine job of updating the post-punk sounds of the Clash and Gang of Four. The **Gravel Pit.** Led by iron-lunged vocalist Jed Parish, this snappy quartet produces highly inventive organ-fuelled pop. The **Figgs.** After a stint as Graham Parker's touring band, and a couple of bad major-label experiences, this New York City-based trio is back releasing fine records. Its latest, "Sucking in Stereo," is chock-full of driving guitar, catchy hooks, and Mike Gent's gritty vocals. Expect Parish to sit in here on at least one song; he lends his fleshy Hammond-organ skills to the single "Gonna Get Out."

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Dec. 12-13: **Rickie Lee Jones.** The post-beat chanteuse has just released "It's Like This," a collection of standards, seventies pop tunes, and other covers. Jones unimaginatively revisits Gershwin and Lerner and Loewe with scatty predictability, but she's smart enough to have drafted a sharp backup band and a host of quirky collaborators, including Dan Hicks, Joe Jackson, Taj Mahal, and Ben Folds (who digs into "Up a Lazy River" and Traffic's "Low Spark of High-Heeled Boys," the CD's high points). On the surface Jones's latest may be light in the new-ideas department, but, all the same, she's got one of the finer voices in the business, and when she sings a song it's hers alone.

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—**Už Jsme Doma** (loosely translated as Now I Get It), an explosive and powerful avant-punk Czech band, arrives on Dec. 14. Formed in 1985 in defiance of the Communist regime, the band played music that was considered antisocial by the government, and for more than four years they performed in the Czech underground (their first gig was an illegal concert on a barge). With a protean lineup (only tenor saxophonist Jindra Dolanský is an original member), the Prague-based band outlasted the Communists, releasing five albums and touring extensively since the Velvet Revolution. The Czechs are now wrapping up a lengthy sojourn in North America, showcasing their most recent record, "Ears," which features ferocious saxophone playing, Slavic-influenced melodies and rhythms, and soaring ensemble singing. With **Barbez,** a multilingual Brooklyn quintet that produces woozy café rock. Elements of klezmer, French *musette,* punk, and tango are bound together by moody, smart lyrics and a mesmerizing accordion redolent of dripping candles.

MERCURY LOUNGE

217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Dec. 17: The **Pernice Brothers.** When Joe Pernice and his brother released "Overcome by Happiness," two years ago, Joe, the singer and guitarist, made a leaping departure from his previous work with the neo-country-rock outfit the Scud Mountain Boys. With the Pernice Brothers, he frees himself from the traditional structure of country music and adorns the bare bones of his alterna-Americana sound with comparatively vast orchestrations, resulting in gracefully melancholic pop.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND

130 W. 3rd St. (777-7745)—Dec. 13: **John Cale,** the other guy from the Velvet Underground, offers a solo piano show. Dec. 14: San Diego's **Hot Snakes** reunites John (Speedo) Reis, the front man

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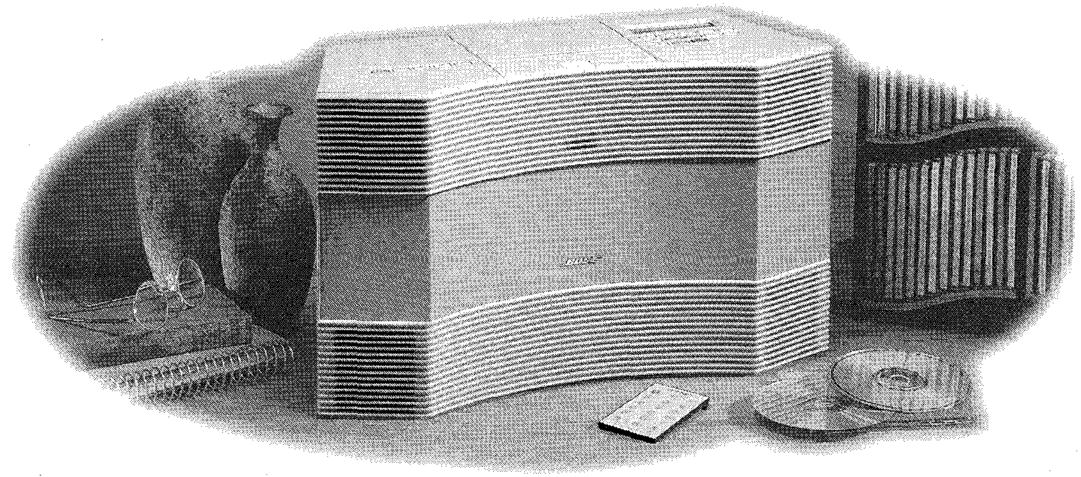

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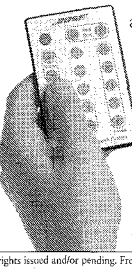

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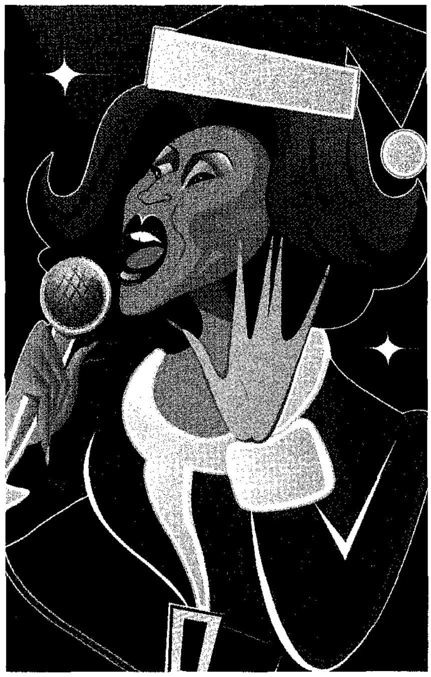
for Rocket from the Crypt, and the guitarist Rick Farr (a.k.a. Eric Froberg), who played with Reis back in the early nineties in the rapid-fire Southern California punk band Drive Like Jehu. What does this mean? The answer is a raucous night of supersonic guitar rock.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Jan. 6: The vocalist **Andrea Marcovicci** is at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Dec. 17: **Super Bass,** featuring **Ray Brown, Christian McBride,** and **John Clayton, Jr.** You don't have to be a bass fanatic—not that there's anything wrong with that—to appreciate the majesty of three of the most accomplished players of the instrument. In the hierarchy of present-day jazz bass, Brown is the acknowledged monarch, McBride the heir apparent, and Clayton, Jr., a noble knight of the realm.



ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE: *Thanks to such Phil Spector-produced songs as "Wait 'Til My Bobby Gets Home" and "He's a Rebel," Darlene Love's voice was one of the birth cries of rock and roll. At Joe's Pub this month, the sexagenarian is singing as if she were still on top of the world, if not the charts. Backed by a seven-piece band, Love belts out holiday favorites, gospel songs, and R. & B. standards, along with a few of her hits, to a jolly crowd that remembers what was on the radio during the Kennedy Administration. The joy they feel, and express, during Love's rendition of "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)"—which first appeared on the now classic 1963 album "A Christmas Gift for You from Phil Spector"—is nearly contagious.*

ROBERT RISKO

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through Dec. 31, **Bobby Short.** ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Barbara Carroll** is in attendance through Dec. 31.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (339-4095)—Through Dec. 30: The pianist and vocalist **Michael Feinstein** closes out the year, or the millennium, if you're one of those sticklers.

IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Dec. 17: The trio of the pianist **Paul Bley,** the bassist **Gary Peacock,** and the drummer **Paul Motian** may not play together on a regular basis, but you'd never know it from their uncanny musical telepathy. These guys can swing with the best of them, yet their true métier is tempoless group interplay that pushes both standards and originals right to the brink of free, if disciplined, improvisation. The quiet intensity of their compact sets can be exhilarating. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Dec. 17: The **Larry Goldings** trio. No one is going to confuse Goldings with Jimmy Smith, or even with Baby Face Willette, for that matter, but he has enough funk in his fingers to convince you that the electric organ can be a witty, pungent instrument. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Dec. 15-17: Keep your eye on saxophonist and composer **Henry Threadgill;** he lives to surprise you. Whether stocking his bands with multiple tubas or pitting electric guitars against Indian harmoniums, this avant-gardist's avant-gardist traffics only in the unexpected. Dec. 19: **Phillip Johnston's Transparent Quartet.** Evoking West Coast jazz as easily as they reinvent the conventions of silent-film music, this offbeat drummerless combo—saxophones, vibraphone, piano, and bass—pumps iron-rich blood into contemporary chamber jazz.

UP OVER JAZZ CAFÉ
351 Flatbush Ave., at Seventh Ave., Brooklyn (718-398-5413)—Dec. 15-16: The baritone saxophonist **Cecil Payne** is experiencing the kind of second wind that should be mandatory for those in their seventies. A dyed-in-the-wool bop musician who came up with Dizzy Gillespie's original late-forties big band, Payne is the master of a burly blowing; this is an authenticity that can't be taught in schools.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Dec. 17: **Jackie McLean,** with the **Cedar Walton** trio. In the fifties, alto saxophonist McLean was a sideman on early Miles Davis sessions; by the sixties, players like the iconoclastic Ornette Coleman had appeared as sidemen on McLean recordings. Having kept himself in the fray for decades, McLean is now a compact compendium of modern jazz. His range makes the distinctions between bop, hard bop, and modal playing disappear. Having the expert pianist Walton's group behind him will only up the improvisational ante. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"The Still-Lifes of Evaristo Baschenis: The Music of Silence"** presents eighteen paintings by the seventeenth-century Northern Italian artist. In the absence of more compelling virtues, these pictures of kitchen equipment and musical instruments are displayed to maximize awareness of their "consummate technical achievement." The show is full of treatises on perspective, and the room is divided, with paintings on one side and instruments on the other, including a Stradivarius violin. This layout happily makes it a challenge to see models and paintings in one glance—which would do both a disservice—but, farther on, curators have hung the portrait of a pink-cheeked young boy with a lute, by Caravaggio, alongside the last Baschenis. The arrangement, intended to point out Baschenis's influence, serves only to show his limitations.Through March 4. ♦ **"The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection,"** billed as the most comprehensive exhibition ever assembled in the West, features more than a hundred examples of the graceful form. Through Jan. 7. ♦ **"The Year One: Art of the Ancient World East and West,"** a selection of antiquities from the permanent collection, all of which were created around 1 A.D. Through Jan. 14. ♦ **"Art and the Empire City"** presents paintings, photographs, and decorative art popular in New York between the completion of the Erie Canal, in 1825, and the beginning of the Civil War, in 1861. Through Jan. 7. ♦ **"The Golden Deer of Eurasia: Scythian and Sarmatian Treasures from the Russian Steppes."** Through Feb. 4. ♦ **"Rain of the Moon: Silver in Ancient Peru."** Through April 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

ONLY CONNECT

WEB FOR WEB'S SAKE
If real estate is all about location, location, location, the Internet seems to be all about utility, utility, utility. How much money can a site save you, and how much time, and how can it help you advance through the information economy? At least a few sites, however, have escaped the clutches of pragmatism, and are using the Web for gleefully senseless experiments that have more in common with Dada and Surrealism than with Amazon.com or on-line stock tickers.

With its cheery animations and puckish soundtrack, **Nosepilot** (www.nosepilot.com) plays like "Yellow Submarine" for your computer. On the opening screen, a green wig wearing goggles and a snorkel blows blue bubbles while the words "Anglais" and "Français" scroll across the lenses. Click on your preferred language, and the preview will give way to the feature, in which pastel dinosaurlike creatures parachute to earth with giant parasols and a blue-and-gray rat sits astride a huge runny nose. The results are strangely beautiful and soothing, a digital acid trip.

Superbad (www.superbad.com) demands more active participation from its visitors. The site, a latticework of linked pages which follows no logic (or an internal logic far too complex for the ordinary human brain to discern), is a fully interactive environment that, at various times, suggests the work of M. C. Escher, Lewis Carroll, and Donald Barthelme. With no unifying aesthetic—one page shows a trio of Kentucky Fried Chicken logos, another a grainy image of a nineteen-fifties techno-geek speaking on a telephone, and still another a field of pulsing stars—Superbad generates endless surprises.

Equally bewildering is **Snarg** (www.snarg.net), one of the more venerable Web-art sites. Snarg's oval canvas functions like an on-line petri dish; click on any of the colored dots that appear onscreen and watch as the cellular shapes spin and shift and plumes of digital vegetation begin to grow. When you're done with the flagship site, click over to the adjuncts (including www.snarg.net/justbecause) for more hypervisual hyperlinking.

—*Ben Greenman*

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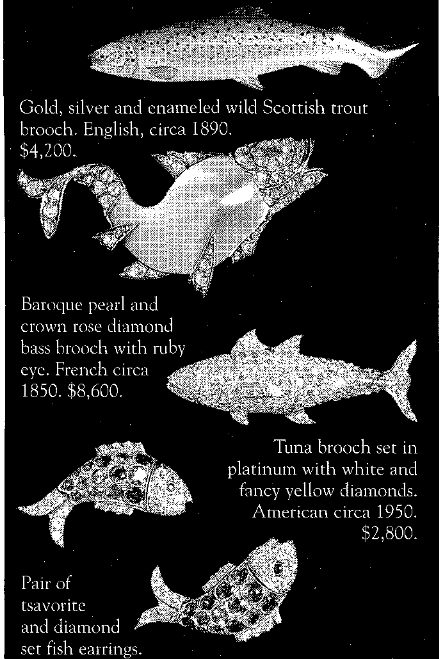

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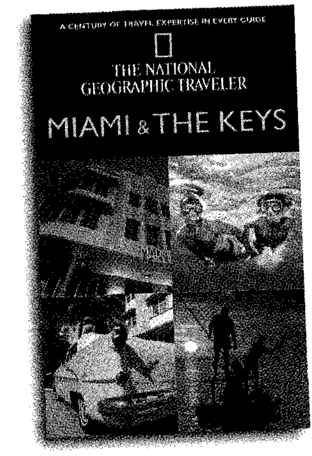

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Open Ends,"** the third and final installment of **"MOMA 2000,"** the yearlong exhibition devoted to the art of the past century, covers works from 1960 to the present. Through Jan. 2. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—One design icon salutes another: the museum devotes its spiralling Frank Lloyd Wright spaces to an exhibition that measures the impact of Giorgio Armani, the original relaxed-fit couturier. Through Jan. 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—A retrospective devoted to the work of Sol LeWitt, the Tom Sawyerish Conceptualist who gets assistants to execute his ideas, includes a zigguratlike sculpture, wall paintings, books, works on paper, and photographs. Through Feb. 25. ♦ A retrospective of the photographs of Edward Steichen. Through Feb. 4. ♦ **"Roni Horn: Still Water (The River Thames, for Example), 1999."** Through Jan. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—**"Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga."** The Viking age lasted some three hundred years—from 750 to 1050 A.D.—but its cultural legacy is far-reaching, as both football fans and opera buffs will attest. (And, were it not for the Vikings, we might have a three-day week; the words "Tuesday," "Wednesday," "Thursday," and "Friday" all derive from Norse.) To commemorate the thousandth anniversary of Leif Eriksson's landing on American shores, the museum sets out to demonstrate that there was more to Norsemen than pillage and plunder (and to teach us, ahem, that they never actually wore horned helmets). Archeological artifacts range from manuscripts through human remains (there's evidence of Christian burial practices) to a whalebone slab used as an ironing board (a Viking invention). The show's centerpiece is a three-quarter-scale, forty-foot-long model of a merchant ship, but its hidden treasure is a selection of nine of the Lewis chessmen, figures made of walrus ivory, each carved with a unique expression, unearthed on a beach in the Outer Hebrides in 1831. Through Jan. 21. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—A retrospective of Lee Krasner's work ends its national tour in the artist's birthplace. Through Jan. 7. ♦ **"Hip-Hop Nation: Roots, Rhymes, and Rage"** presents videos, clothing and accessories, manuscripts of lyrics, F.B.I. letters, magazine covers, and installations that catalogue reactions to the genre. Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Gold of the Nomads: Scythian Treasures from Ancient Ukraine."** Through Jan. 21. ♦ **"Nardo di Cione: The Reuniting of an Altarpiece."** Through Feb. 18. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—**"The Opulent Eye of Alexander Girard."** This exuberant American designer is probably best known as the inventor of the sunken living room, variously called a conversation pit or a love pit, depending on your mood (an unsunken facsimile is included in the show). While Girard does not rank in the design pantheon alongside his friends (and sometime collaborators) Charles and Ray Eames, the brilliant colorist gave the neutrality of modernism what he called an "irrational frivolity." The designer's two greatest passions, the art of the meal and folk art (he inspired the Eameses in their use of ethnic objects), were combined in his celebrated design for the restaurant La Fonda del Sol, housed in the Time-Life Building from 1961 to 1974. Too bad the name Fiestaware was already taken; it perfectly sums up the happy spirit of Girard's table settings for the restaurant, one of the high points of this lively show. Through March 18. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS
548 W. 22nd St. (989-5566)—For the past thirty years, the Belgian artist Panamarenko has built rickety contraptions not seriously intended for flight. The first major exhibition in this country for the self-named sculptor pairs a monumental work from the late sixties with a more streamlined take on aviation made earlier this year. The Aeromodeller, as the vintage behemoth is called, resembles a blimp, inflated and ready for takeoff despite its evident age (the bag is yellowed and appears brittle, like an old cocoon). More modest in scale, the second piece could be a collaboration between the Wright brothers and Daedalus, with bicycle wheels and black-tipped wings. Each flying machine holds the promise of transcendence, if not the proof, and is a reminder that one man's snake oil is another's salvation. Through June 17. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO
Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (831-7272)—Though **"Latin-American Photographers from the Lehigh University Collection"** includes much predictably Catholic imagery, almost everything else surprises, beginning with Mario Cravo Neto's "Ode," a boldly composed black-and-white image of a boy with his hand around a goose's beak. The vintage prints, like Martin Chambi's 1932 "Woman Bullfighter," tend to grapple with ethnic identity, while more recent work moves from the personal—Adál Maldonado's "The Arrest of a Fugitive Sensation," a sort of self-portrait with flaming fart—to the abstract, like Liliana Porter's toy dialogue "Conversation with Bear." An Abelardo Morell camera-obscura photograph of the museum is accompanied by a working camera obscura, behind black velvet curtains, which, on sunny days, projects the action taking place on 104th Street onto a wall. Through Jan. 14. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
583 Broadway (219-1222)—The latest space in this temple of the new is the belowground, Internet-café-like Media Z Lounge, which offers free access to new and mixed-media work. The design team Lot/Ek has rolled in a slew of round, orange seats and wrapped the wires for the café's Internet stations around the building's heavy nineteenth-century columns. High-definition televisions on a wall run experimental videos. In a back room, Christian Marclay's mixed-media installation, "The Sounds of Christmas," flashes holiday album covers on the walls and plays mixes put together by guest d.j.s from the artist's archive. (Open Wednesdays and Sundays, noon to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 8.)

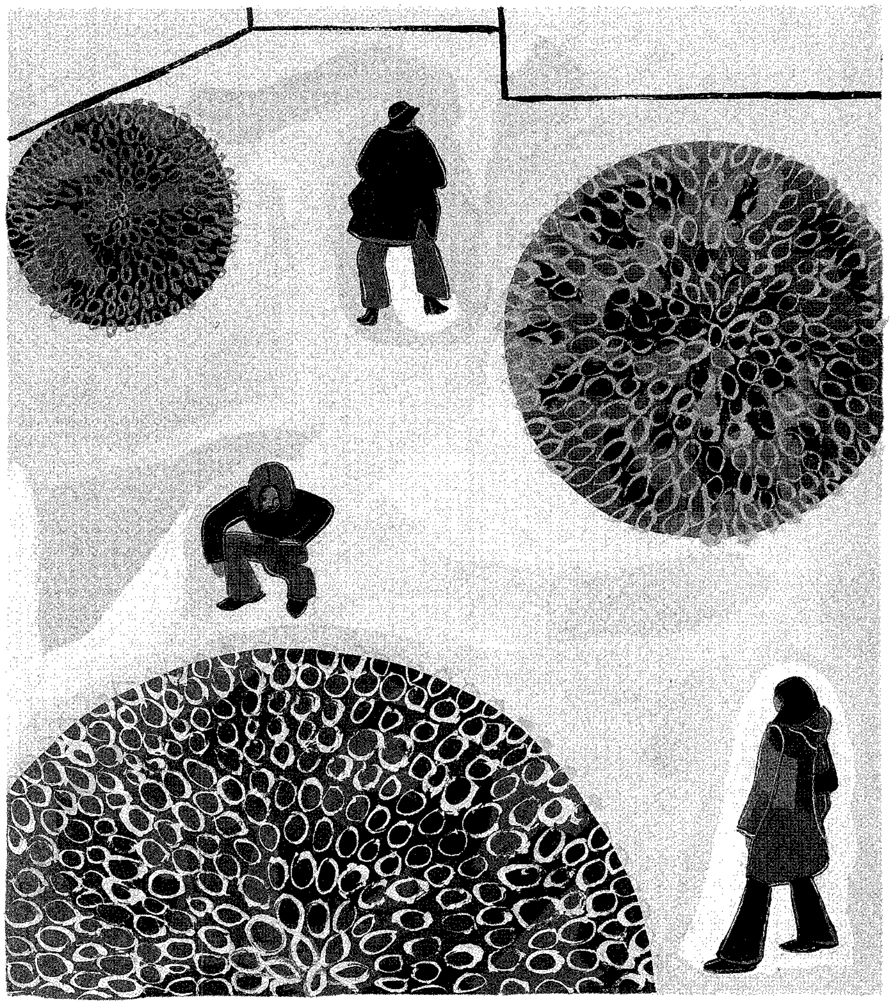
GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

MARY CASSATT
A lovely show of more than two hundred previously undiscovered prints and drawings by the only American formally invited to join the Impressionists. Cassatt's primary subject was mothers and children, and her best work is tender without being mawkish. As if to encourage viewers to consider Cassatt in a fresh light, the show opens not with the familiar domestic scenes but with a shadow world—a lighted series of soft-ground etchings portraying dimly lit, solitary figures reading or attending the opera. Cassatt's gifts as a printer were exquisite, and the show offers a rare opportunity to compare several states of the same image, as a green dress in "Gathering Fruit," for example, shifts from turquoise in one print to a delicate apple green in the next. Through Dec. 22. (Adelson, 25 E. 77th St. 439-6800.)

CY TWOMBLY
A triumphant procession of canvases—"one painting in ten parts"—by a master of cryptic lyricism. Inspired by an Egyptian pharaoh, the cycle, called "Coronation of Sesostris," opens with a scrawled

pictograph of a blood-red sun on a white ground and culminates in a barge shape carrying stick figures that could be flowers, flags, or oarsmen. The mood shifts from tranquil through majestic to elegiac as Twombly dabbles with a palette of crimson, purple, and yellow. Some canvases are punctuated by the artist's characteristically illegible script; others are shrouded in veils of color as translucent as mist. Through Jan. 26. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313.)



"Powerpuff," three sculptures by Polly Apfelbaum, at D'Amelio Terras.

MARINA SAGONA

Short List

SUE COE
Galerie St. Étienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734. Through Jan. 6.
JOAN MIRÓ
Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Through Jan. 6.
FRED TOMASELLI
James Cohan, 41 E. 57th St. 755-7171. Through Jan. 13.
GEORGE NICK
Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Through Dec. 23.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

POLLY APFELBAUM
Like a malicious house guest, Apfelbaum creates stains—little spreading blobs of indelible color. But these stains, unlike those of the domestic variety, occur in hundreds of hues, from Merlot crimson and egg-yolk orange to brilliant yellow, violet, and peacock green. The hues, dripped onto swatches of velvet, are then carefully cut out and arranged on gallery floors, in vast, spiralling nebulae. The three on view here, collectively titled "Powerpuff," are intricate and lovely, if uncommunicative. One imagines them as clusters of gorgeous viruses, preening happily as they multiply. Through Dec. 23. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460.)

BERNARD FRIZE
In his U.S. début, this accomplished Parisian gives American-style abstraction a French twist. Each of his recent paintings is a sort of braided rainbow, composed of continuously intertwining strokes of color. As the braids meander across expanses of smooth white canvas, their constituent colors gradually mingle and weaken. Brilliant purples, oranges, and blues become ghostly lavenders, apricots, and grays. The process itself is simple—a recipe, even—but the results, executed at high speed by Frize and a team of assistants, have a goofy beauty, like liquid versions of friendship bracelets. Through Dec. 23. (Cohan Leslie and Brown, 138 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 206-8710.)

ANDY WARHOL
What does David Hockney, in his recent lectures and interviews, mean by "Andy's line"? Here, almost on cue, is a posthumous demonstration. Warhol didn't invent tracing, but he was the first artist to flaunt it. In these 1983 drawings of boy toys (robots, police cars, airplanes, etc.), the Pop star's pencil line has a kind of lazy, uniform fluidity—it's slightly hammy, like an actor winking at us from a player piano. He knows that we know that what he's doing is boring. For admirers, the result is a deliciously wry contrarian gesture; for detractors, it's still just tracing. Through Dec. 22. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave, at 27th St. 563-4474.)

"BECAUSE SEX SELLS"
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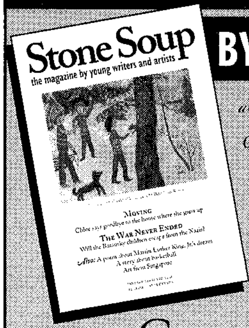

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THE NEW YORKER

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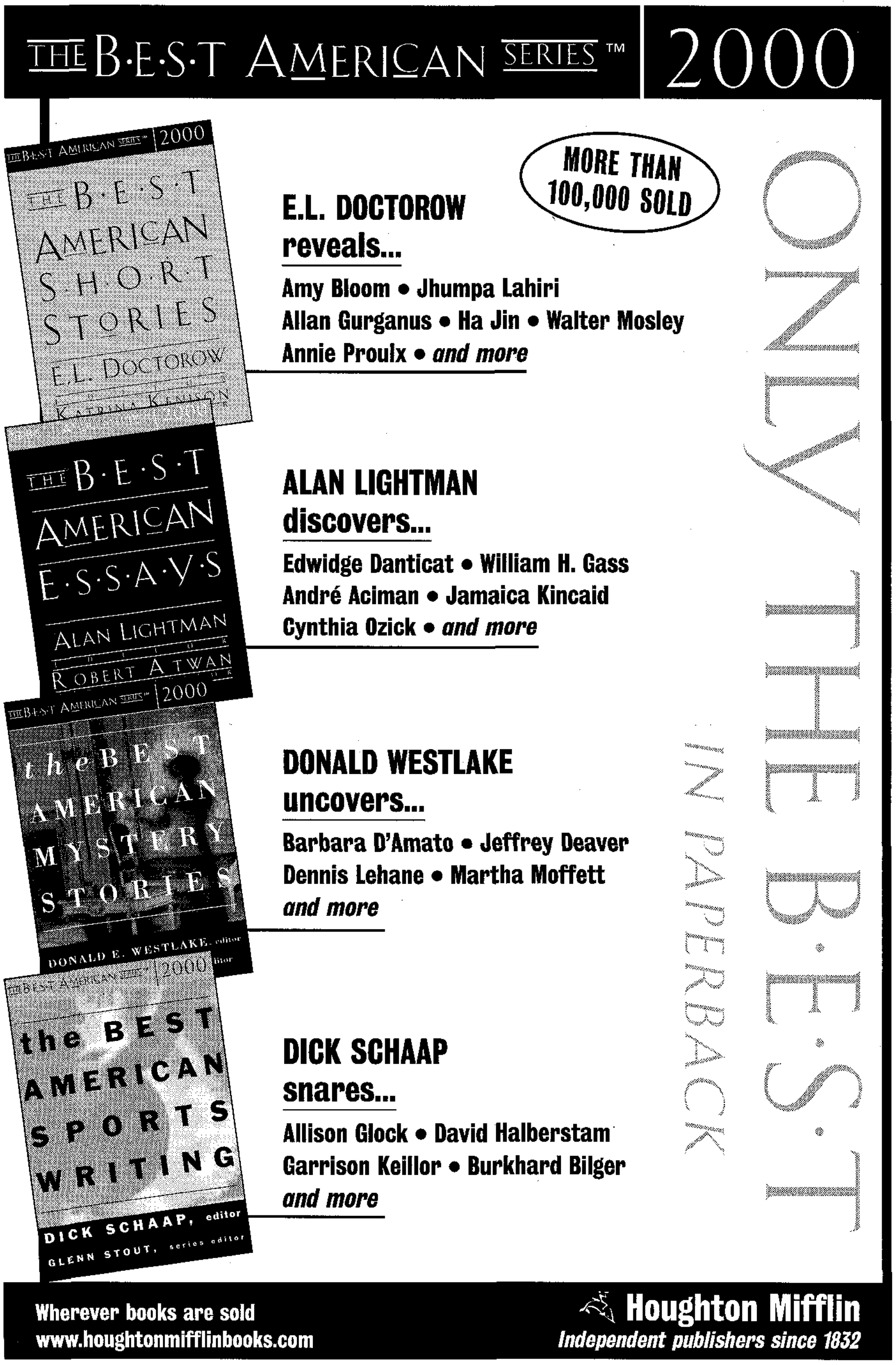
have been more selective; much of what's on view has been only minimally altered in its journey from the newsstand's upper shelves to eye level. James Bidgood's photographs, however, with their beautiful boys primping in glittering boudoirs, offer a pleasantly fantastical vision of erotic bliss. The photographic team of Pierre et Giles, among others, have acknowledged Bidgood as an inspiration. Natalie van Doxell, meanwhile, offers accessories for the more practical-minded sensualist: wallpaper and bedsheets printed with a curious, fine-grained amber pattern that is a photographic enlargement, we are told, of Naomi Campbell's skin. Through Dec. 23. (Nikolai, 505 W. 22nd St. 414-8511.)

"PROCESS/REPROCESS: JAPAN AND THE WEST"
This fascinating look at reciprocal influences opens with documentation of a 1961 performance by Ushio Shinohara, photographed by William Klein. The artist wraps his hands in paint-dipped rags and punches a scroll of paper, leaving random patterns of splatter marks which could be subtitled "Zen and the Art of Action Painting." There are lots of surprises, including Richard Serra drawings from the early seventies (apparently, a visit to Japan shaped his interest in multiplanar space) and zany 1999 videos by the Japanese collaborative team Kyupi, Kyupi. The show is best summed up by the title of a Yoko Ono edition it includes, "A Box of Smile." Through Dec. 23. (Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 255-8450.)

Short List

JAN HENLE
Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 929-2262.
Through Jan. 6.
FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES
Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.
Through Jan. 13.
SUE WILLIAMS
303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.
Through Dec. 16.



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GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

TOLAND GRINNELL
Living out of a suitcase has never looked better than in this cunning installation of self-contained sculpture, a hybrid of Duchamp's *boîte-en-valise* and a high-end picnic hamper. The simplest piece is a portable go-go platform, created by lining the interior of a pigskin trunk with jet-black flooring and wiring it with halogen lights. The most opulent is a pair of his (crocodile) and hers (red leather) luggage, each outfitted with an absurd array of luxury goods, including matching saddles and gold- and silver-plated ponies. Your response to these follies may depend on whether you think Grinnell is satirizing or celebrating the logo life style. Either way, to call it over the top would be an understatement. Through Dec. 30. (Visionaire, 11 Mercer St. 274-8959.)

LUC TUYMANS
The scale is larger, the palette less muted, and the subject matter atypically topical for Tuymans in a powerful new series of paintings examining the colonization of the Belgian Congo (later Zaire, now Congo). Despite its political subject matter, the work remains as exquisitely elusive as curls of smoke, graceful and remote. Take the almost indecipherable image in "Leopard," a leopard-skin rug that nearly fails to emerge from the early-morning palette of pale blue, lilac, and sand. Through Dec. 23. (David Zwirner, 43 Greene St., 966-9074.)

"FIGURE IN THE LANDSCAPE"
This group show is a concise meditation on the turning points between representation and abstraction. The heart of the show is a late canvas by Philip Guston; its meat-slab reds and clear-sky blues exude an authority that's nearly matched by every other work on view. Guston's brand of cartoonish bravura, peculiarly American, is best reflected in the work of Carroll Dunham, who shares his deceptive simplicity and subversive humor. Dunham's "Orange Glove" opens the show with a hotheaded thug (think Guston's hooded toughs) in a palette so hot it threatens to burst into flames. Through Jan. 13. (Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 695-0753.)

Short List

KIM DINGLE
Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. 431-3685.
Through Dec. 22.
ROBERT MOSKOWITZ
Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.
Through Feb. 3.
ROBERT WILLIAMS
Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300.
Through Jan. 27.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
Dec. 13: Fine books and manuscripts. Among the American items are several letters written by Thomas Jefferson, including a recently discovered document concerning Virginia's cessation of its claims on Western lands. ♦ Dec. 14: Coins, medals, and banknotes, along with gold bars and nuggets from the 1857 wreck of the S.S. Central America. ♦ Dec. 15: Carpets from Europe and Asia. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
Dec. 13 at 10 A.M.: More European and Asian rugs. ♦ Dec. 14 at 10 A.M.: Books and manuscripts, including works by Whitman and Poe. The highlight of the sale is a previously unknown first draft for the "Circe" episode of James Joyce's "Ulysses." ♦ Dec. 14 at 6: The house offers its own haul of gold items from the S.S. Central America. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

DOYLE
Dec. 13 at 10 A.M.: Furniture, paintings, and decorations from England, America, and Continental

Europe. ♦ Dec. 13 at 4: Holiday gifts for all ages, including silver, glassware, china, and toys. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

SWANN
Dec. 14: Maps, atlases, and decorative graphics, including a seven-volume set of Audubon's "Birds of America" from the first octavo edition, from the eighteen-forties. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

DAN ESTABROOK
Estabrook uses William Fox Talbot's calotype process and an even earlier salt-nitrate wash recipe to produce silver chloride "salt prints" that mimic the work of the medium's founding fathers, offering quiet elegies to the chemical anomalies that distinguish their early photography. In his most ephemeral and poetic images, the subject disappears, leaving a set with no one on it, or a table with no still-life, and the shaded, spotted surface created by the shortcomings of the primitive process. The one-of-a-kind waxed-calotype negative "Model's Stage" shows nothing more than a set of footprints across an empty space. Through Dec. 30. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767.)

WENDY EWALD
Loaded, romanticized photographs of children have grabbed the art world's spotlight lately, while Ewald's more dignified pictures languish. "An African American Alphabet," like most of her projects, was made in collaboration with kids—in this case, a group of Cleveland middle-school students. They chose a word or phrase for each letter, posed to illustrate it, then painted and scratched capital and lowercase letters and the words themselves onto each image's negative. A small boy with a bigger child's elbow resting lightly on his shoulder embodies "brother," while a girl showing viewers the back of her unbrushed head defines "nappy." Through Jan. 30. (Scalo, 560 Broadway. 334-9393.)

HANS-CHRISTIAN SCHINK
Schink's large-format color pictures document one recent by-product of German reunification: the development of a vast new highway network in the former East Germany. These latest Autobahns are intended to encourage the flow of industry and prosperity into the *neue Länder;* instead they create a new kind of no man's land. Schink, an unlikely heir to the nineteenth-century Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich, presents each concrete bridge and overpass as a breathtaking ruin, monumental and deserted in the dewy morning light. The roadside rest stop in "A 14 Rastplatz Plötzetal" speaks volumes as counterpart to verdant groves in the distance. Through Dec. 15. (Goethe Institute, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St. 439-8700.)

JOHN WATERS
For "Straight to Video," Waters (whom William Burroughs once called "the Pope of trash") splices together stills from Hollywood movies photographed directly from the TV screen. Taken out of context, the misdirected images form new B movies of their own, steeped in Waters' trademark bad taste. "Gore" storyboards bloody hearts and other organs; "Retard" offers a lineup of actors playing mentally disabled characters; "Toilet Training" depicts Hollywood stars emoting on the can. Best of all, "Farrah" presents an homage to the big hairdo, without which no John Waters project would be complete. Through Dec. 30. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. 941-0401.)

"PARTY PICTURES"
This show, subtitled "From Studio 54 to Cannes 2000," party-hops from Garry Winogrand's vintage black-and-white museum-party prints through Warhol's flash-blinded clubland to the current scene: Larry Fink's fashion-crowd chronicles and Jessica Craig-Martin's merciless charity-circuit exposés will make viewers want to get back in the time machine. But the vanity, misery, and overexposed cleavage that Craig-Martin records (alongside beauty, pleasure, and more flattering dress) are timeless—as is

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hope for a satisfying social life, as the artist pointed out recently. "Why do people go to parties? They're all bad. But people get dressed up—they go again and again. It's some kind of strange optimism." Through Jan. 6. (Lawrence Rubin Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave. 445-0444.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
I.C.P.'s redesigned midtown space hosts its inaugural round of shows: Annie Leibovitz's "Women," Lorie Novak's "Collected Visions," and a survey of the Center's large permanent collection called "Reflections in a Glass Eye." Uptown, "Eugène Atget: The Pioneer" continues. (Uptown: 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6. Midtown: 1166 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 10-5; Thursdays and Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

EDWARD STEICHEN
Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223. Through Dec. 30.

See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the Whitney Museum.

Short List

CAROL BOVE
Keenan, 3 Crosby St. 431-5083.
Through Dec. 23.

STEPHANE COUTURIER
Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930.
Through Dec. 23.

SIMPSON KALISHER
De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.
Through Dec. 23.

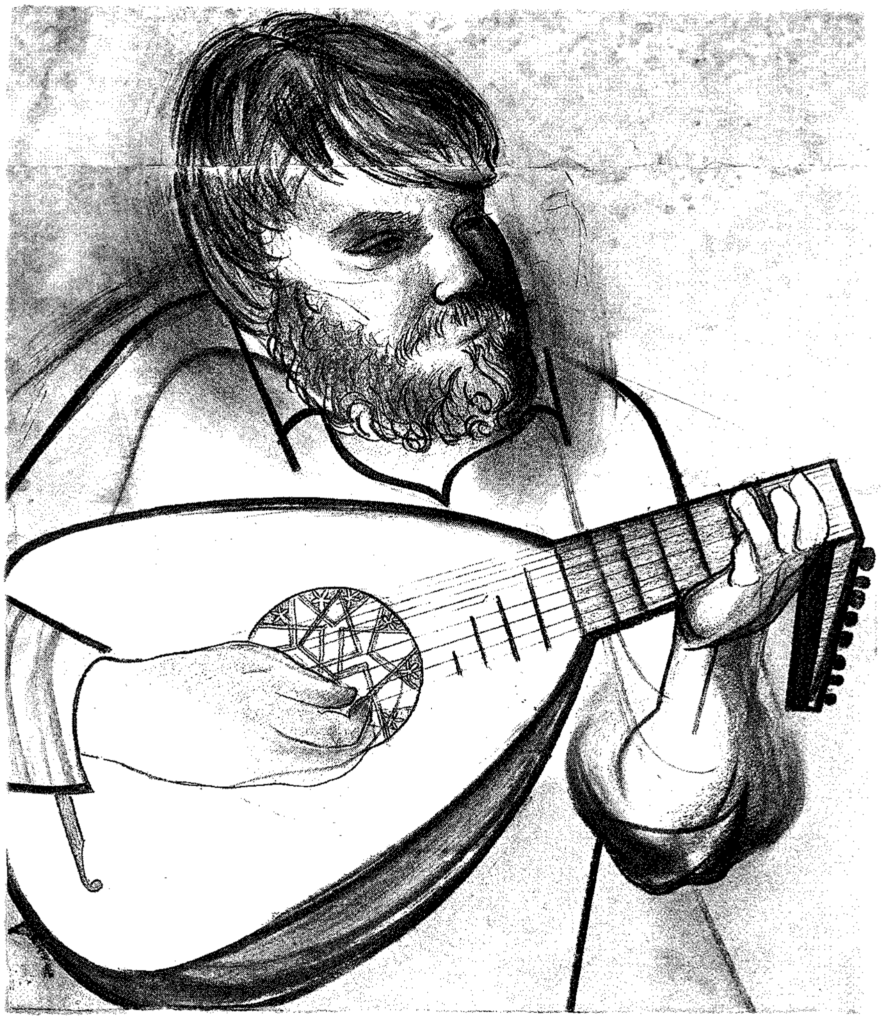
JASON ODDY
Gallery 24, at 552 W. 24th St. 414-0370.
Through Jan. 13.

JACK PIERSON
Cheim & Reid, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.
Through Jan. 6.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
"Der Fliegende Holländer," with Nina Stemme, Roland Wagenführer, James Morris, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; conducted by Valery Gergiev. (Dec. 13 at 8 and Dec. 16 at 2.) ♦ The last performance this season of **"Der Rosenkavalier,"** with Cheryl Studer, Susanne Mentzer, Elizabeth Norberg-Schulz, and Eric Halfvarson; Jiří Kout. (Dec. 14 at 7:30.) ♦ The company's new production of **"Il Trovatore"** continues its run, with Marina Mescheriakova, Dolora Zajick, Neil Shicoff, Roberto Frontali, and Dimitri Kavrakos; Carlo Rizzi. (Dec. 15 at 8.) ♦ **"La Traviata,"** with Ruth Ann Swensen, Marcelo Alvarez, and Dwayne Croft; Jun Märkl. (Dec. 16 at 8:30 and Dec. 19 at 8.) ♦ The season's first performance of **"The Merry Widow,"** with Frederica von Stade, Jennifer Welch-Babidge, Håkan Hagegård, Paul Groves, and John Del Carlo; Asher Fisch (in his Met début). (Dec. 18 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

DICAPO OPERA: "LA VIDA BREVE"
The petite company completes a two-week presentation of de Falla's rarely staged opera. In Spanish, with supertitles. (Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. 288-9438. Dec. 15-16 at 8 and Dec. 17 at 4.)



Paul O'Dette plays music for lute and Baroque guitar, at the Metropolitan Museum.

DAVID TOMB

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Classic all-German programs are both a blessing and a bane to the concert scene: How long can one stare at perfection without going blind? The very imperfections of Brahms's First Piano Concerto give Kurt Masur's latest program (with the pianist Garrick Ohlsson) a bit of spice. Brahms's style would eventually become a perfect balance between the intellect and the heart, but here we find him still emerging from the shadow of his mentor, Schumann—whose Second Symphony, a triumph of pure melody, completes the bill. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 14-16 and Dec. 18-19 at 8.)

STAATSKAPELLE BERLIN
The conductor-pianist Daniel Barenboim completes his series of Carnegie Hall "Perspectives" concerts with a run of Beethoven programs. Dec. 13 at 8: Symphonies Nos. 2 and 8 and the Piano Concerto No. 3. ♦ Dec. 15 at 8: Symphony No. 7 and the Piano Concerto No. 4. ♦ Dec. 16 at 8: Symphony No. 6 (the "Pastoral") and the Piano Concerto No. 5 (the "Emperor"). ♦ Dec. 17 at 3: Symphonies Nos. 1 and 9, the latter performed with the singers Melanie Diener, Rosemary Lang, Robert Gambill, and René Pape, and the Chicago Symphony Chorus. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
The A.S.O.'s music director Leon Botstein conducts the world première of "El Yerushalayim," by the young composer David Israel, a three-part symphony for tenor, boy soprano, and orchestra, based on texts by the twelfth-century Judeo-Spanish poet Judah Halevi. Dvořák's "New World Symphony" rounds out the evening. (Alice Tully Hall. 580-0099. Dec. 14 at 8.)

CAROLS
Two groups offer up the old favorites, with audience singing allowed. Cantori New York presents its annual "Festival of Carols," at two locations. (Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, 263 W. 86th St. Dec. 14 at 7. / Church of St. Luke in the Fields, 487 Hudson St. Dec. 15 at 8. For reservations, call 439-4758.) ♦ The Choirs and Orchestra of the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola offer music from around the world, including folk songs from Ireland. (Park Avenue at 84th St. 288-2520. Dec. 15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 3, and Dec. 17 at 4.)

RIVERSIDE CHORAL SOCIETY
More Beethoven. The Society's music director, Patrick Gardner, conducts two late works, the "Consecration of the House" Overture and the Kyrie, Credo, and Agnus Dei from the "Missa Solemnis." The Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Jane Shaulis leads the quartet of soloists. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 213 W. 82nd St. 780-2181. Dec. 16 at 8.)

THE BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS
Bach's six concertos, the pillar of Baroque chamber music, have become a worthy secular alternative to the religous concerts of the holiday season. The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center mounts two concerts, each of the complete set. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5788. Dec. 17 at 5 and Dec. 19 at 7:30.) ♦ **Note:** Brooklyn's Bargemusic will present its own, four-concert series later in the month.

VIRGIN CONSORT AND ORCHESTRA
Kyler Brown directs Christmas music by Handel, Charpentier, and the eighteenth-century Cuban composer Esteban Salas. (Church of St. Jean Baptiste, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. 570-2130. Dec. 19 at 8.)

RECITALS

INTERPRETATIONS SERIES
A concert pairing the Cuban-American classical composer Tania León with the experimental-jazz artist Leroy Jenkins. Three works of León's (one a world première) will be performed by the ensemble Continuum, with the baritone Thomas Buckner; Jenkins will lead his own group in improvisational compositions, with the dancer Felicia Norton. (Merkin Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Dec. 14 at 8.)

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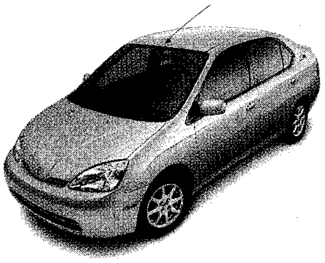

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BARGEMUSIC
Dec. 14-15 at 7:30: The violinist Gil Shaham and friends play music for strings by Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. ♦ Dec. 16 at 7:30: The Borromeo Quartet, a formidable young group, presents music by Mozart, Bartók, and Copland (the Two Pieces for String Quartet). ♦ Dec. 17 at 4: The Quartet returns, with music by Beethoven, Bartók, and Martinů (the Duo for Violin and Cello). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

AMANDA ROOCROFT
The acclaimed British soprano, with pianist Malcolm Martineau, makes her U.S. recital début in music by Schumann, Strauss, Debussy, and Britten (the waspish 1937 Auden cycle "On This Island"). (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Dec. 17 at 2.)

MARILYN HORNE FOUNDATION
The foundation for young singers presents the mezzo-soprano Liesel Fedkenheuer, with the pianist Miah Im, in music by Brahms, Wolf, Verdi, Richard Hundley, and others. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 582-2000. Dec. 17 at 3.)

PAUL O'DETTE
O'Dette, America's most prominent lutenist for over a decade, offers a program of music from Renaissance and Baroque Italy, in the courtyard of the Metropolitan Museum's Robert Lehman Wing. (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 17 at 7.)

RUSSELL SHERMAN
The veteran American pianist, equally distinguished as a teacher of his instrument, tests his powers with Liszt's "Transcendental Études," some of the most challenging music of the Romantic age. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Dec. 18 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

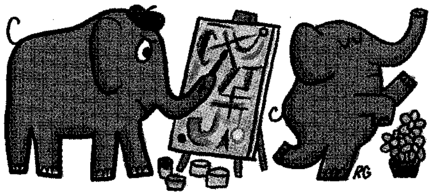
BOOK REPAIR GALA
Two years ago, the veteran author Estelle Ellis realized that readers had no way to fix their battered, torn, scribbled-upon, best-loved books. "Conservators and librarians can get materials to restore books, but ordinary people can't," she pointed out. What was worse, anyone who could scare up book-restoring tools would not necessarily know how to use them. Now she has come to the rescue with "The Booklovers' Repair Kit," which looks like a weighty, august dictionary from the outside but contains a cache of special erasers, glue, hinge tape, an ivory wrinkle smoother, mending papers, and a thoughtful, illustrated instruction book. On Dec. 14 at 6, Ellis and the master binders Wilton Wiggins and Douglas Lee (who co-authored the book) will demonstrate, over cocktails and crumbling volumes, how to use the kit. (Swann Galleries, 104 E. 25th St., 5th Floor. For reservations, which are required, call 254-4710.)

READINGS
Dec. 14 at 7: By the *Oxford American* contributors Roy Blount, Hal Crowther, Tony Earley, John J. Sullivan, and William Gay. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Dec. 14 at 8: By Dani Shapiro, Darcey Cosper, Jack Murnighan, and Elizabeth Wurtzel, from their contributions to "Full Frontal Fiction: The Best of Nerve.com," an anthology of erotic writing. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS
Dec. 13 at 6: The eighty-nine-year-old composer and impresario Gian-Carlo Menotti, the author of "Amahl and the Night Visitors," talks about his life in the opera. (Graduate Center, City University of New York, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. For more information, call 758-2757.) ♦ Dec. 13 at 6:15: Susan Zuccotti, who is the author of "The Italians and the Holocaust," and whose latest book, "Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy," will be published in January, discusses the reign of Pope Pius XII. (Graduate Center, City University of New York, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. For more information, call 817-8215.) ♦ Dec. 14 at 8: Following her multimedia piece "Bloodwork," the poet and performance artist Nicole Blackman addresses the audience. Note: The performance runs through Dec. 16. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.)

BOOK CURRENTS
Elephant Memories

Over the past year, at least a hundred people have been killed by wild elephants in northeastern India. When the British journalist Tarquin Hall heard about the generous bounty that had been placed on a particularly dangerous rogue male, he was skeptical: "No doubt, I mused, corruption lay at the heart of the matter." But in **TO THE ELEPHANT GRAVEYARD** (Atlantic Monthly), Hall meets an elephant hunter more eager to save than to shoot his quarry, and an elephant so clever that, on one occasion, he even buried his victim.



RODNEY ALAN GREENBLATT

Perhaps the most ingenious solution to the problem of elephant preservation came from the Russian Conceptualists Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid: they decided to turn the animals into artists. In his introduction to **WHEN ELEPHANTS PAINT** (HarperCollins), Dave Eggers describes a muggy summer trip to Thailand, where Komar and Melamid discovered some untapped elephant talent. One animal, named Nom Chok, takes an "obvious pleasure in the creamy viscosity of the paint"; another, called Bird, favors "broad, tectonic strokes" reminiscent of Franz Kline's. Last March, fifty paintings were auctioned at Christie's; the artists, who did not attend, raised seventy-five thousand dollars for pachyderm-related charities.

Far away, in a kingdom ruled by a debonair king in a green suit, elephants have been producing fine work for decades. **BONJOUR, BABAR!** (Random House) collects the six original Babar books created by Jean de Brunhoff in the nineteen-thirties. Babar scares off a rhinoceros army by painting fierce faces on the backsides of his subjects; builds an elephant paradise named for his queen, Celeste; travels abroad by hot-air balloon; and, true to his French roots, celebrates happy occasions with "cakes and dainties of all kinds."

—*Nell Freudenberger*

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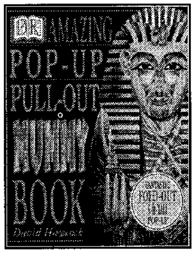
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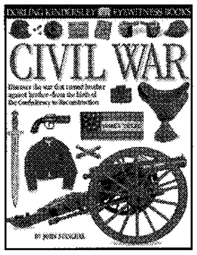
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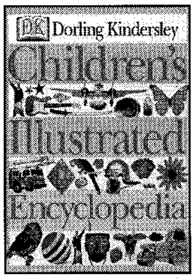
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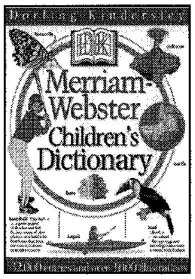
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MOVIES OPENING

CHOCOLAT
Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Dec. 15.

DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR?
A comedy with Ashton Kutcher and Seann William Scott as two potheads with memory problems. Directed by Danny Leiner. Opening Dec. 15.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE
The latest animated fable from Disney takes place in an ancient South American kingdom and features voices by David Spade, Eartha Kitt, and John Goodman. Directed by Mark Dindal. Opening Dec. 15.

POLLOCK
A bio-pic of Jackson Pollock directed by Ed Harris, who also plays the Action painter. With Jennifer Connelly, Val Kilmer, and Marcia Gay Harden. Opening Dec. 15. (Lincoln Plaza.)

THE VISIT
A drama about a young inmate (Hill Harper) and his prison psychologist (Phylicia Rashad). Written and directed by Jordan Walker-Pearlman. Opening Dec. 15.

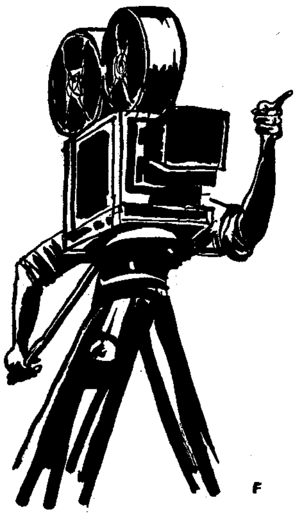
WHAT WOMEN WANT
Mel Gibson plays an advertising executive who acquires the ability to read women's minds, in this comedy directed by Nancy Meyers. With Helen Hunt, Bette Midler, Marisa Tomei, and Alan Alda. Opening Dec. 15.

FILM NOTES

BEST IN SHOW
Christopher Guest reunites much of the cast of "Waiting for Guffman" for another mock documentary; the target this time around is the cloistered world of championship-dog breeding. Guest directs and scripts with a loose, improvisational style (no dialogue was written down), and while some of the scenes glide along with a quick-witted tempo, others are awkward. Best-in-group awards go to Parker Posey and Michael Hitchcock as an uptight suburban couple whose courtship involved adjacent Starbucks franchises, John Michael Higgins as a preening owner who outshines his Shih Tzu, and Fred Willard as a chipper commentator who showers asinine comments on the proceedings. If Guest has a trademark style, it's the airtight earnestness he demands of his cast—there's not one wink in the entire film.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

BILLY ELLIOT
The British director Stephen Daldry has previously concentrated on theatre; now, as if to prove that he's a man for all art forms, he's made a film about ballet. Billy Elliot (Jamie Bell) is a slim, pugnacious boy who doesn't enjoy his boxing lessons but casts a jealous glance at the dance class that rehearses nearby. He joins in, prospers, gets some private tuition from his careworn teacher (Julie Walters), and ends up auditioning for the Royal Ballet. Will he make it? Can you guess? Although the film is set during the miners' strike of 1984 (the most grievous strife in Britain's recent history), it slowly sheds its anger and abrasive comedy in favor of something softer. The best thing on view is Bell, whose ratty, unsentimental demeanor just about sees the story through.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/30/00.) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Cinema I, and Lincoln Square.)

BOUNCE
It doesn't. Ben Affleck plays a callous Los Angeles ad salesman; Gwyneth Paltrow is a young widow; each has reasons to feel guilty about starting a love affair, but the affair happens nonetheless. After some initial comic awkwardness, which is entertaining, the movie slips into trite predictability. Poor Affleck has to be humbled—he gets to eat crow even before he's established himself on screen as a cad. Written and directed by Don Roos, who



did far far better with his 1998 comedy "The Opposite of Sex."—*David Denby* (12/4/00) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Gotham Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

LA BÛCHE
Paris at Christmas, the time of torture: a family whose members don't much like one another plans to gather for a celebratory dinner. As they meet in pairs and trios, we discover crosscurrents of relationships and betrayals, and the movie turns into an intricate puzzle that comes together in the viewer's head. Danièle Thompson wrote the film with her son Christopher Thompson, and also directed. Her work, at times, has a startling candor, as well as the typical French virtue of companionability. The attractive cast includes Claude Rich and Françoise Fabian as the divorced father and mother, and Sabine Azéma, Emmanuelle Béart, and Charlotte Gainsbourg as the daughters. The French economy may be faltering, but from the evidence of this movie the country's fascination with adultery has only increased. In French.—*D.D.* (Paris.)

CHARLIE'S ANGELS
It's the usual story: hitch a couple of electrodes to an old TV show, flick the switch, and hope that it comes surging back to life. This latest effort can't be faulted for energy, but, in most other respects, it barely gives a twitch. The Angels are played by Lucy Liu, Drew Barrymore, and, most engagingly, Cameron Diaz. The plot entails satellites, cell phones, and a threat to "world privacy"—not, one might suppose, a profound cause of anxiety for our flamboyant heroines. The director is someone, or something, called McG, and he, or it, seems content to bundle one high-kicking, high-volume scene on top of the next. You can't hear yourself think, which is probably a good thing.—*A.L.* (11/13/00) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

CHOCOLAT
A confectionary fairy tale, photographed in pale-lemon winter light. In France, in 1960, a beautiful and charming woman (Juliette Binoche) and her little girl (Victoire Thivisol) waft into a small town, open a *chocolaterie*, and provide the unhappy and repressed inhabitants with exactly the kind of bonbons they need to make their troubles go away (the chocolate, laced with an old Mayan powder, acts as an all-purpose elixir). This inspires the hostility of the town's impotent deity, the Comte de Reynaud (Alfred Molina), who rallies the forces of reaction. Lasse Hallström's production is yet another complacent movie about the free spirits versus the squares; this one commends the audience for favoring such dangerous things as eating, dancing, friendship, sex, and riverboats. Judi Dench, as a grouchy old lady, transcends the syrup. With Lena Olin, Peter Stormare, and Johnny Depp as some sort of Irish river rat who fixes doors, plays the guitar, and ever so gently seduces the heroine. In English.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, Gotham Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON
The new Ang Lee film is scripted in Chinese and set in the China of the early nineteenth century, although we could be watching a fable from any time in the last millennium, or from no time at all. Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh), probably the least excitable action heroine in modern movies, is given a sword by Li Mu Bai (Chow Yun Fat), for safekeeping. Needless to say, it is soon stolen, and the hunt is on. When pursuing a likely suspect, Mu Bai and Shu Lien tend to take the quickest route, whether it's up a wall, over a roof, across a lake, or, best of all, from tree to tree. They don't fly so much as dance through the air, taking fairy-tale strides. (The shoot involved plenty of wirework, all of it erased in postproduction.) The film is alive with fighting, yet it does not feel violent; it's about the struggle of love over the course of time, yet it brims with sorrow. Athletic honors are shared between Yeoh and Zhang Ziyi, who plays a rebellious young noblewoman with a fiery past. The outright winner is Ang Lee, who is at once dependably stylish and smartly unpredictable. Where will he turn his talents next?—*A.L.* (12/11/00) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 64th and 2nd.)

THE GRINCH
A bold, not to say foolhardy, attempt to film Dr. Seuss. Jim Carrey plays the Grinch, a crabby, green-faced sluggard who lives at the top of Mt. Crumpit. He is consumed with loathing for the Whos, the cute race that lives in the valley below, and you can see his point: some of them are so doggedly joyous that they ought, at the very least, to be locked up. The director is Ron Howard, in a whimsical vein; the screen is so crammed with candy-colored detail that you come out feeling slightly sick, though children with a sweet tooth may succumb. The news that the Grinch is not really mean but simply misunderstood is no surprise, but it still spells doom for the movie. With Jeffrey Tambor and, hunting hard for laughs, Christine Baranski.—*A.L.* (11/27/00) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Union Square.)

A HARD DAY'S NIGHT
A satiric celebration of anarchic youth and the blast of oxygen they give a wheezing kingdom. The director, Richard Lester, and the screenwriter, Alun Owen, set out, in 1964, to show how the Beatles' phenomenal fame encased them in a cocoon. But the Fab Four aren't larvae—they're brilliant butterflies, and they have an unsurpassed rapport with their fans, whether in the streets of London or in a movie theatre. Lester directs fearlessly, shooting them every which way to capture their antic verve. The nonchalant iconoclast John Lennon "snorts" a Coke bottle; Paul McCartney, in a bowler hat and fake beard, clowns like an aristocratic elf. Ringo Starr becomes the group's hangdog mascot, George Harrison its pocket of moodiness. Lester devised strategies for making visual poetry out of rock which music-video directors have been stealing for decades. In one of the most glorious musical numbers in movie history, the Beatles break out of their keepers' care and zigzag through a field to the tune of "Can't Buy Me Love."—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum.)

JOUR DE FÊTE
As a director, Jacques Tati has a spare, quick, improvisatory touch. As a comedian, buoyancy and impersonal eccentricity in the face of disaster are his special style. In this 1950 film, shot in the village of Sainte-Sévère-sur-Indre, with villagers playing many of the parts, the tall, ungainly Tati is the postman who attends the village fair and sees a documentary on the advanced, mechanized American postal system. He is overcome with enthusiasm for speed, and though he has no helicopter, he has his bicycle. He takes off, and what happens is unpredictable, even if you've already seen the movie—it's all so odd you can't help but forget some of it. Written by Tati and Henri Marquet. It's

not silent (it has sound effects and music), and it's not in French, either; Tati has devised a kind of unintelligible yet expressive gibberish. It's like the talk of robots who've got fouled up.—*Pauline Kael* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Dec. 17.)

MEET THE PARENTS
Jay Roach moves on from the campy delights of the Austin Powers series to direct this smoothly acted comedy of errors. Ben Stiller plays a modern man charged with a Victorian task: asking his girlfriend's father for permission to marry her. With a calamitous surname ("pronounced just like it's spelled, F-O-C-K-E-R") and a faintly hilarious profession (male nurse), Stiller seems like a sitting duck for the secretive, overprotective father, played by Robert De Niro. Stiller grovels, De Niro growls, and the girls (Blythe Danner and Teri Polo) watch from the sidelines. This is dumbed-up comedy: there are just enough unexpected moments to redeem all the easy pleasures of the slapstick.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

MEN OF HONOR
Robert De Niro's bizarre performance as a choleric Navy diver—spasmodic body movement and an out-of-the-swamp Southern accent—is the only genuine life in this exceptionally square military biography. An earnest Cuba Gooding, Jr., plays the real-life hero Carl Brashear, who overcame racist hazing to become the Navy's first black master diver, in the nineteen-fifties. De Niro is the instructor who initially tries to discourage Brashear and then becomes his champion. Familiar as it may be, the story has stirring moments, although the screenwriter, Scott Marshall Smith, and the director, George Tillman, Jr., do their best to kill them. Each scene shows the hero facing some Challenge, which he sternly Confronts and then Overcomes.—*D.D.* (11/20/00) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER
A skillful, unnerving documentary that re-creates the massacre of eleven Israeli athletes by Palestinian terrorists at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Even today, the ironies are painful to contemplate. The Germans, eager to dispel remaining doubts about the peaceable character of the "New Germany," kept security guards away from the Olympic Village and tried to persuade the Palestinians, once they had taken hostages, that the killing of Jews on German soil should not happen again. Later, at an airport near Munich, the local police performed with an ineptitude almost hard to believe. The movie, narrated by Michael Douglas, consists of period television footage, a few staged episodes, and interviews with participants, including the sole surviving terrorist and some very sheepish German officials. The massacre is not given sufficient historical context, but as a moment-by-moment report of a horrifying event the movie is both instructive and deeply upsetting. Directed by Kevin Macdonald. Produced by Arthur Cohn.—*D.D.* (Film Forum.)

PROOF OF LIFE
A competent, entertaining, but uninspired large-scale thriller about an idealistic engineer (David Morse) who gets kidnapped for ransom by drug guerrillas in South America. His wife (Meg Ryan), abandoned and helpless in an infinitely corruptible country, attracts the loyalty of a roughneck (Russell Crowe) who works as a negotiator and rescuer for insurance companies. The outlines of the plot have been lifted from "Casablanca": the shrewd tough guy who seems to be out only for himself sacrifices his desires and delivers the noble booby of a husband back to his wife. Crowe has charisma, physical prowess, and sexual authority; Meg Ryan just seems petulant. Despite reports of an on-the-set romance between them, they don't deliver much heat. The purple clouds and thick green forest matting of Ecuador, where the movie was shot, look great. With a fine performance by David Caruso as a fellow-roughneck. Taylor Hack-

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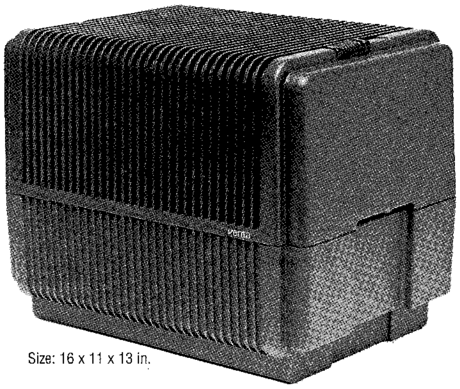

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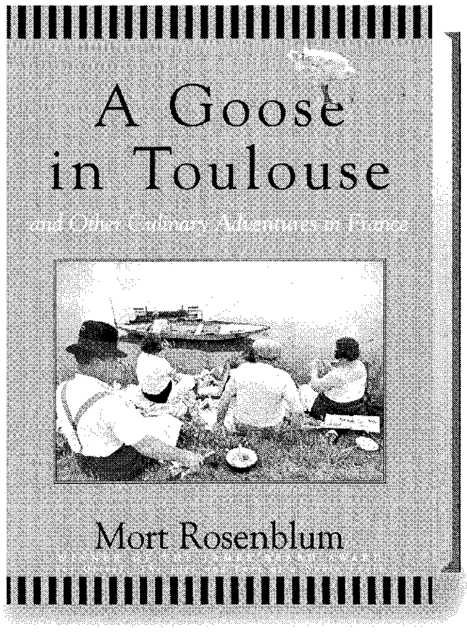

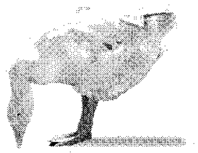

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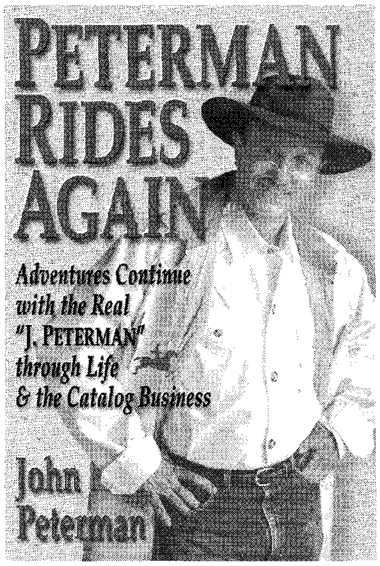
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ford directed.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, Coronet Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

QUILLS

Philip Kaufman turns eagerly back to sex, a topic that he has merely brushed against in the years since "Henry and June." Geoffrey Rush plays the Marquis de Sade, imprisoned in a lunatic asylum but determined to continue writing—and, if possible, publishing—his scurrilous works. He is befriended and, for a while, tolerated by the Abbé Coulmier (Joaquin Phoenix), the priest in charge; the regime darkens with the arrival of Dr. Royer-Collard (Michael Caine), who is under orders to block de Sade's creative juices. Add the ripe presence of a willing laundress (Kate Winslet), who smuggles out the manuscripts, and the stage is set: what for, it is never quite clear. The movie declines into a drab, cloistered hymn to freedom of speech, and Kaufman's directing of period frenzy is surprisingly leaden; rising above it is Rush, alternately cooing and blustery, and almost certainly preferable to the real Marquis.—*A.L.* (11/27/00) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

REQUIEM FOR A DREAM

Darren Aronofsky's new film stars Ellen Burstyn as Sara Goldfarb, a Brighton Beach widow who launches herself on a crash diet—a path that will lead to pill addiction and electroshock therapy. Meanwhile, her son Harry (Jared Leto) and his girlfriend, Marion (Jennifer Connelly), yield to the pull of hard drugs. Aronofsky divides them by split screen, and punches home their addictions with a blistering montage of pills, puffs, and dilating eyes. All this is managed with formidable skill, but it shuts the movie down, and the various junkies—even Burstyn, who gives the role everything she's got—end up looking less substantial than their respective poisons.—*A.L.* (10/9/00) (State and Union Square.)

SPRING FORWARD

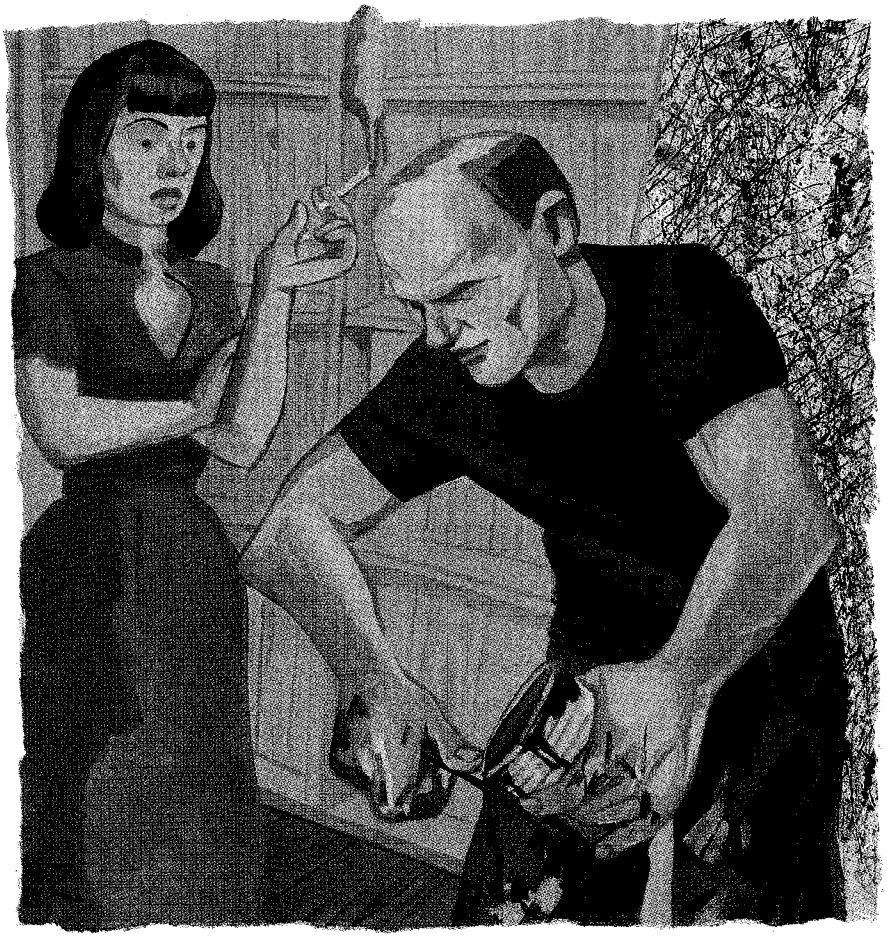
Men without women. A young ex-convict (Liev Schreiber) takes refuge in a scenic New England town, where he gets a Parks Department job and a mentor in the form of a wise old man (Ned Beatty). They talk to each other the way men do only in movies, with complete sentences and neat, instructive anecdotes. Beatty teaches Schreiber what it means to be responsible, and Schreiber turns Beatty on to marijuana and an appreciation of the infinite. This mixture of Robert Bly and Raymond Carver may be too musky an aroma for all but the most sensitive of the species. Tom Gilroy wrote and directed; the acoustic-guitar soundtrack gives the film the feel of an extended James Taylor song.—*M.A.* (Cinema Village and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

A TIME FOR DRUNKEN HORSES

The Northern Iran winters are so cold that the Kurdish smugglers who live there feed their mules alcohol so that they will carry loads over the mountain passes. In this world of high-risk border crossings and death by land mine, a fatherless young boy named Ayoub scrapes out a living doing odd tasks, supporting his sisters and crippled brother. The director Bahman Ghobadi's affection for his subjects gives the film a certain lightness. He takes the raw materials of his homeland—the harsh landscape, communal rooms, and lambent-eyed children—and fashions a visual poem. Ghobadi documents all this without intruding, and the results are quietly enthralling. In Kurdish.—*M.A:* (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

UNBREAKABLE

Another sombre, accomplished Philadelphia story from M. Night Shyamalan, the writer and director of "The Sixth Sense." A smirkless and bald Bruce Willis plays a melancholy football-stadium guard who hides his inborn supernatural powers. Samuel L. Jackson, with a mass of Little Richard hair, is an irascible devotee of comic-book art who suffers from osteogenesis imperfecta; his bones crum-



Opening December 15, Marcia Gay Harden and Ed Harris in "Pollock."

ble easily, and he's always taking spills and getting broken into pieces. He pursues Willis through the cheerless blue-gray city and tries to convince him that he must act like a superhero in the comics. Somehow this will redeem Jackson, an unhappy man who's physically incapable of doing anything at all. Jackson succeeds, but far too late in the movie, and there's no joy or liberation in Willis's sudden aggression. The fantasy never makes much sense (what *is* Willis supposed to do for Jackson?), but the picture is impressively controlled—slow-moving, morose, frightening, hushed.—*D.D.* (12/4/00) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly.)

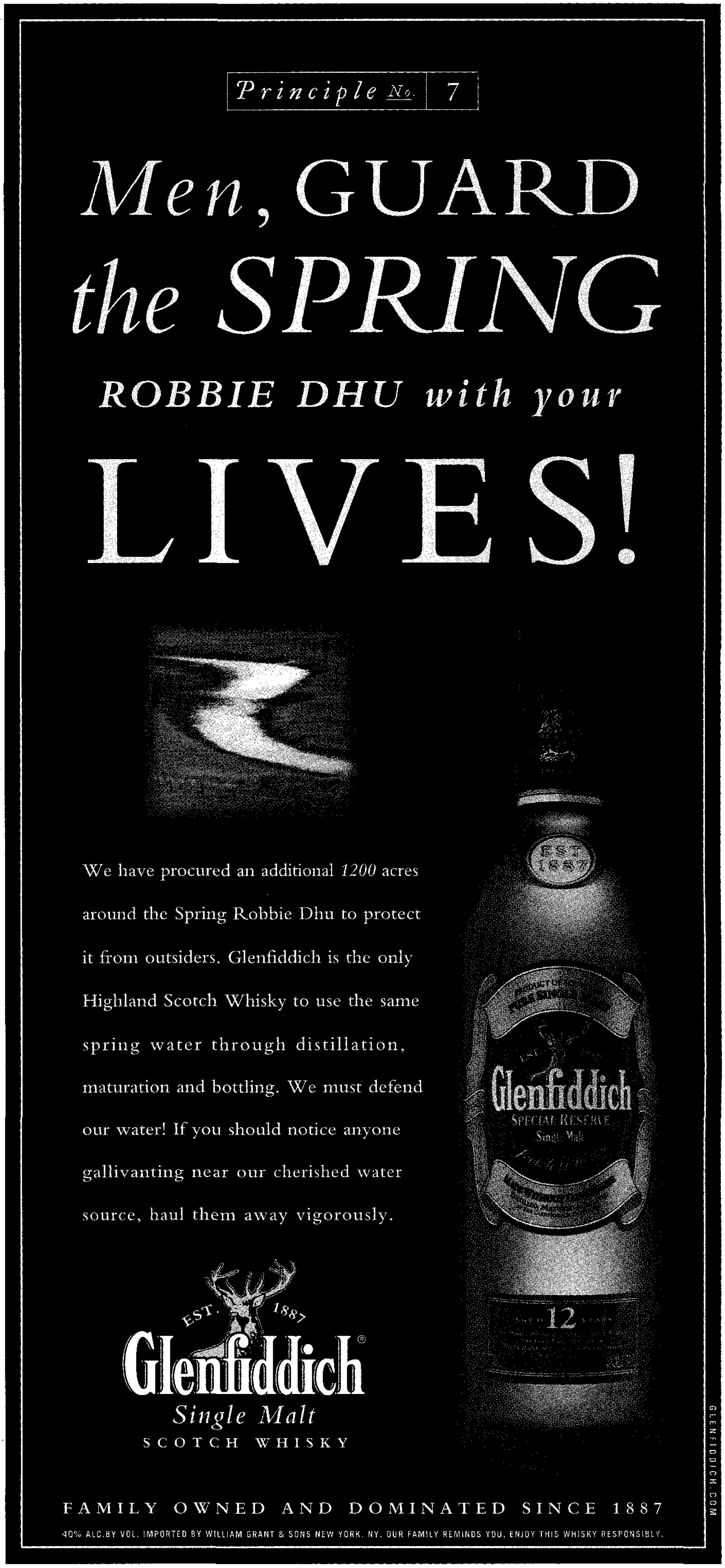
VENUS BEAUTY INSTITUTE
A melancholy portrait of a perversely lonely Parisian single woman (Nathalie Baye) who picks up men at will but revolts when a raffishly handsome sculptor (Samuel Le Bihan) falls in love with her. Filmed in the luscious, synthetic blue-and-pink hues of the beauty parlor in which the heroine works, the picture offers a nonjudgmental view of women's obsessions and of sexual temperaments in all their variety. Unfortunately, it loses drive and focus near the end and slips away—it's half of a very good movie. Bulle Ogier plays the proprietor of the beauty shop; Tonie Marshall wrote and directed. In French.—*D.D.* (Empire 25, 59th Street East Cinema, and Pioneer.)

VERTICAL LIMIT
It's hard to tell if the special effects in this high-altitude thriller are just plain bad or an intentional homage to the clunky pre-digital productions of the mid-eighties—even the eagle in the opening scene looks fake. The cherub-faced Chris O'Donnell climbs a mountain to rescue his sister, and along the way there are plenty of vertiginous frights as well as some truly scary acting. The movie's immaculate disregard of logic and gravity becomes a source of mirth, both in the theatre and afterward.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, Union Square, and Waverly.)

WUTHERING HEIGHTS
Despite the Surrealists' love of the novel, Luis Buñuel and Emily Brontë prove to be a classic mismatch—almost everything about his adaptation goes dead wrong, though in fascinatingly awful ways. Buñuel cuts the novel down to just the Heathcliff-Cathy section, concentrating on the messy conflicts that arise when "Cathy" marries "Edgar" and "Heathcliff" marries "Isabella" (they've all been given Mexican names). The combination of Buñuel's iconoclastic shock tactics (he starts the film with Cathy shooting vultures and Edgar pinning butterflies) with truly awful actors (Heathcliff reduces Isabella to helpless passion by burying his face in her neck) limits the film's appeal to aficionados of bad movies by great directors. Buñuel once apologized for this botch by explaining that he'd wanted to film the novel since 1930, and therefore jumped at the chance to make it in Mexico in 1953—even with actors that his producer had originally hired for a musical. The film does have a fabulous final ten minutes, when Cathy's ghost haunts Heathcliff to the swelling strains of Wagner's "Liebestod." In Spanish.—*M.S.* (Museum of Modern Art; Dec. 14 and Dec. 17.)

THE YARDS
A lowering, heavy-browed thriller from the director James Gray, who made a name for himself with "Little Odessa." In many ways, this is more of the same: a tight and sometimes tortured community, the sober settling of scores, and what feels like an official rationing of daylight. Mark Wahlberg plays Leo, who's trying to go straight; he takes a job as sidekick to his old friend Willie (Joaquin Phoenix), who fixes contracts for the New York subway system. Things go well, then badly, then worse still, until Leo is dwelling in subterranean solitude—Gray's kind of place. The supporting cast is tough and tested: Faye Dunaway, Ellen Burstyn, and especially James Caan, who plays Leo's uncle by marriage. The film may be humorless, unflustered by the

ZOHAR LAZAR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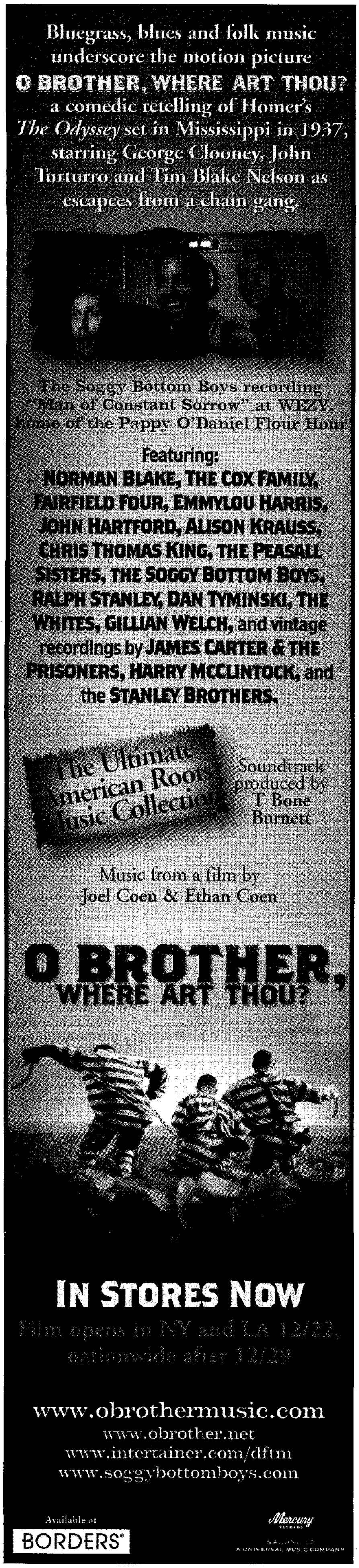
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YOU CAN COUNT ON ME
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

ALMOST FAMOUS (9/18/00)
BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, and First & 62nd Cinemas.
THE CONTENDER (10/16 & 10/23/00)
Beekman.
DANCER IN THE DARK (9/25/00)
Union Square.
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village East Cinemas.
THE 6TH DAY (11/20/00)
Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, and Union Square.
WONDER BOYS (2/21/00)
Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.

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Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

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Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Dec. 31: A Jacques Tati retrospective. All films are in French. Dec. 16 at 2, 4:15, and 6:30: "Playtime" (1968). ♦ Dec. 17 at 2: "Jour de Fête" (†). ♦ Dec. 17 at 4:15: "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (1953).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—Dec. 13 at 6:30 and 9:30: "Avanti!" (1972, Billy Wilder). ♦ Dec. 14 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Report on the Party and the Guests" (1966, Jan Nemec; in Czech). ♦ Dec. 15 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Ear" (1970, Karel Kachyna; in Czech). ♦ Dec. 16 at 2 and 6:50: "Birds, Orphans, and Fools" (1969, Juraj Jakubisko; in Czech). ♦ Dec. 16 at 4:30 and 9:10: "Fruits of Paradise" (1969, Vera Chytilová; in Czech). ♦ Dec. 17 at 2 and 6:50: "Everyday Courage" (1964, Evald Schorm; in Czech). ♦ Dec. 17 at 4 and 9:10: "322" (1966, Dusan Hanák; in Czech). ♦ Dec. 18 at 4, 6:50, and 9:30: "No Smoking" (1993, Alain Resnais; in French). ♦ Dec. 19 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "La Paloma" (1974, Daniel Schmid; in German).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Dec. 13-21 at 1, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, and 10:10: "A Hard Day's Night" (†).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Jan. 2: A Luis Buñuel centennial retrospective. All films are in Spanish. Dec. 14 at 2:30: "A Woman Without Love" (1951). ♦ Dec. 14 at 6 and Dec. 17 at 2: "Wuthering Heights" (†). ♦ Dec. 15 at 2:30 and Dec. 17 at 5: "The River and Death" (1954). ♦ Dec. 15 at 6 and Dec. 18 at 2:30: "Illusion Travels by Streetcar" (1953). ♦ Dec. 15 at 8: "The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz" (1955). ♦ Dec. 16 at 2: "Robinson Crusoe" (1952). ♦ Dec. 16 at 5 and Dec. 19 at 2:30: "This Strange Passion" (1952). ♦ Dec. 18 at 6: "Cela S'Appelle l'Aurore" (1955). ♦ Dec. 19 at 6: "Death in the Garden" (1956). ♦ Films by Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi. Dec. 14 at 6 and Dec. 15 at 3: "Balkan Inventory" (2000). ♦ Dec. 15 at 6 and Dec. 16 at 5: "On the Heights All Is Peace" (1998). ♦ Dec. 15 at 8 and Dec. 17 at 2:30: "Prisoners of War" (1995). ♦ Dec. 16 at 2:30 and Dec. 17 at 5: "Diana's Looking Glass" (1996). ♦ Dec. 18 at 3: "Aria" (1994). ♦ Dec. 18 at 6: "From the Pole to the Equator" (1986).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Dec. 8-27: Contemporary cinema from Spain. All films are in Spanish. Dec. 13 at 1, 5, and 8:45: "To Die (Or Not)" (1999, Ventura Pons). ♦ Dec. 13 at 3 and 7: "Friends Have Reasons" (2000, Gerardo Herrero). ♦ Dec. 14 at 1 and 5 and Dec. 17 at 1:30: "The Goalkeeper" (2000, Gonzalo Suárez). ♦ Dec. 14 at 3 and Dec. 16 at 5: "To Those Who Love" (1998, Isabel Coixet). ♦ Dec. 15 at 1 and 5:15 and Dec. 17 at 3:15: "Yoyes" (1999, Helena Taberna). ♦ Dec. 15 at 3:15 and 9:15: "My Name Is Sara" (1998, Dolores Payás). ♦ Dec. 15 at 7:20 and Dec. 17 at 5:30: "Regarding Buñuel" (2000, José Luis López-Linares). ♦ Dec. 16 at 7, Dec. 17 at 9, and Dec. 19 at 3: "Nico and Dani" (2000, Cesc Gay). ♦ Dec. 16 at 9 and Dec. 19 at 5 and 8:45: "Asfalto" (1999, Daniel Calparsoro). ♦ Dec. 17 at 7:30 and Dec. 19 at 1 and 7: "Leo" (2000, José Luis Borau).

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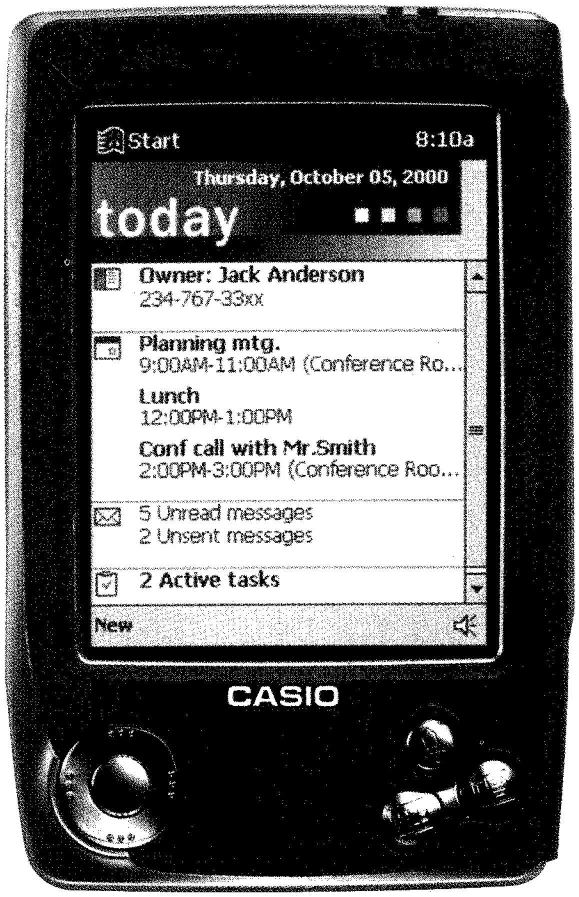
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Thursday, October 05, 2000
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Owner: Jack Anderson
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Planning mtg.
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12:00PM-1:00PM
Conf call with Mr.Smith
2:00PM-3:00PM (Conference Roo...
5 Unread messages
2 Unsent messages
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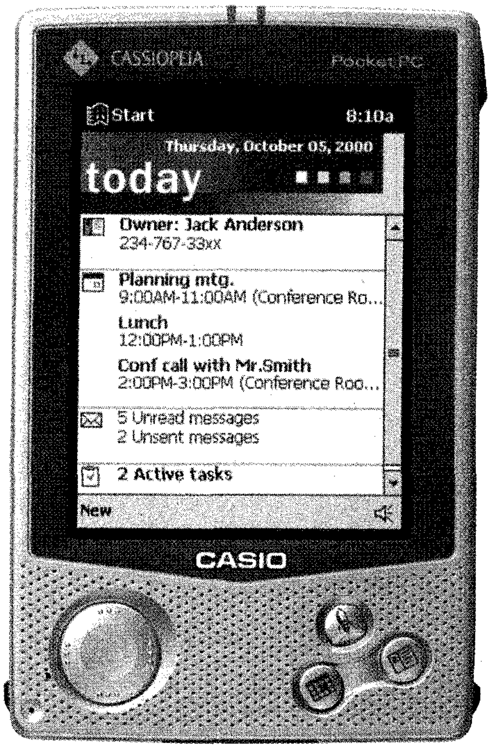
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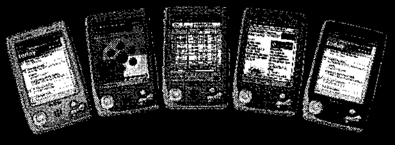

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the unexpected

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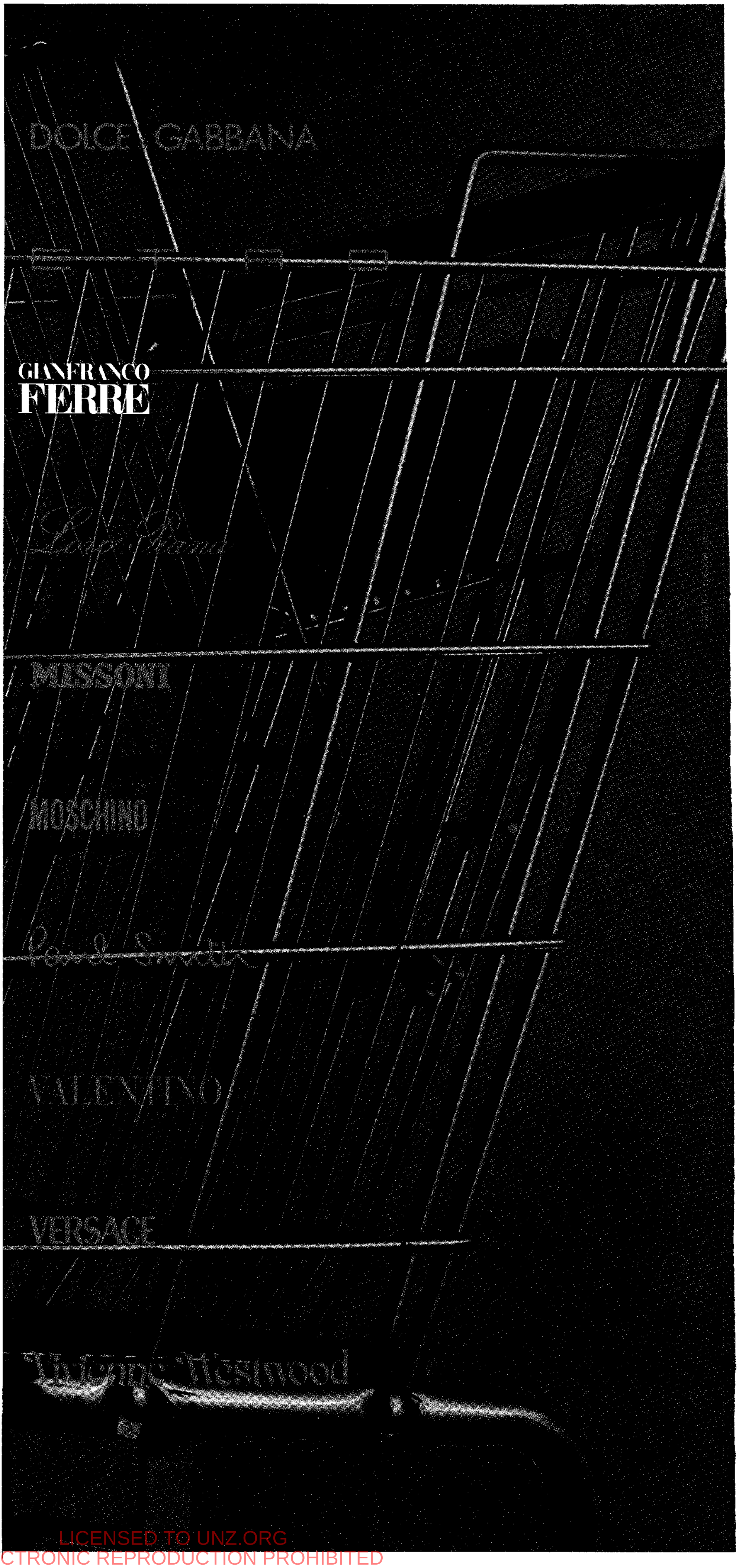
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

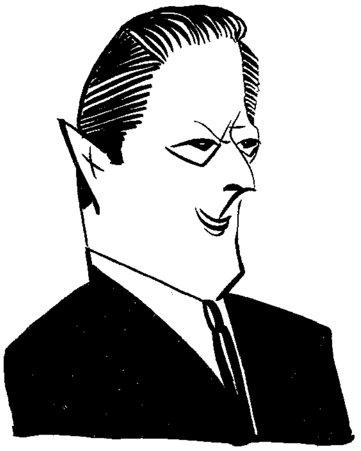
COMMENT
UP FOR THE COUNT

"Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding." That was the line—from Lincoln's second Inaugural—which the news from Tallahassee brought to mind. Of course, the greatest of American Presidents was talking about the most terrible of American wars. We live in gentler times and play for lesser stakes. (And Bush and Gore are a far cry from Lee and Grant.) Still, the stunning decision of the Florida Supreme Court on Friday evening set the stage for what was shaping up as a kind of political Antietam.

As the civilians among us headed home for the weekend, all the forces of this extraordinary, unprecedented episode—the politicians, the lawyers, the high courts of the state of Florida and of the United States, the local officials, the demonstrators, the gladiators of cable television, the state legislature, Congress—massed for a climactic, chaotic battle. The Florida court's ruling—by a vote of four to three, over the stern dissent of its chief justice (so much for the theory of that court's monolithic partisanship)—launched a frenzy of brief-writing, appeal-filing, and preparations for vote-counting. During the campaign, we heard a lot about "battleground states." We're about to learn what that phrase really means.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

For the first time since the week of the election, the outcome seemed truly, deeply in doubt. And when an outcome emerges, as it must, its meaning will be no less mysterious. An unremarked merit of the month just past was that its excitements spared us the standard post-election postmortem, in which the winner is praised for his sagacious grasp of the hopes and anxieties of the public, the loser is excoriated for the many and obvious blunders that derailed his candidacy, and the decision of the voters is seen as foreordained—the inevitable consequence of tectonic forces of character, ideology, and history. The true Florida result (regardless of which candidate the huffing, cranking, screeching infernal machine ultimately disgorges) seemed unknowable and therefore inexplicable.



Al Gore

On Friday morning, George W. Bush's lead in Florida, as officially certified, stood at five hundred and thirty-seven votes. By nightfall it was down to a hundred and fifty-four, and by the time this is read it may have vanished altogether.

It is customary, after a Presidential election, to discern the "message" sent by the voters. But what message did voters send this time? The one discerned by Dick Cheney, who said at the beginning of last week that he and Bush had been "successful" because their "agenda of issues" appealed to "the American people"? A strange deduction, given the American people's preference, small but measurable, for the opposing "agenda." The only clear messages of the past month were delivered not by the electorate but by the Electoral College and the courts. Those messages were that the votes of some citizens—those who live in small states, for example—are more equal than the votes of others, and that the votes of citizens who live in Florida are worth either everything or nothing, depending on who, if anyone, is doing the counting.

If all this makes explanations harder to come by, it takes some of the juice out of recrimination, too. Gore has been criticized for letting the race fall within the electoral system's margin of error, and no doubt he made his share of mistakes. At bottom, though, he did his job: he got more votes than the other guy. And his steely, steady resolve during the post-election period has earned him respect.

Gore's arguably most consequential

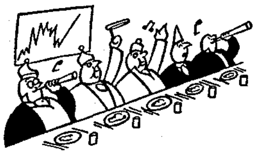
error came after the polls closed. It had been obvious all along that the fairest resolution of the Florida impasse would be a hand recount of the vote in every one of the state's sixty-seven counties. He had a clear right to request such a comprehensive recount during the first seventy-two hours. That would have been acceptable to many Republicans, if not to Bush himself. Gore didn't do that; instead (as he also had a right to do), he limited his request to three counties of his greatest strength. He got around to suggesting a broader recount a few days later, and he repeated the suggestion at least twice in the weeks that followed. But it was obvious that his goal was simply to get the offer, and the other side's refusal, on the record. He could have made a demand for a statewide recount the centerpiece of all his public statements and instructed his surrogates to do the same; and he could, without prejudice to any of his other legal options, have filed suit on behalf of that demand. It was left to the Supreme Court of Florida to offer, in essence, what he was not quite daring enough to seek.

The ultimate outcome may yet depend on whether Bush and his allies have the stomach to use the weapons they control—the Florida legislature and the United States House of Representatives—to thwart a "popular will" that a recount would render only a little less contingent, obscure, and indefinite. With few exceptions, the Republicans have never seemed as ready as their opponents to entertain the possibility of defeat. Their presumptive bitterness has been disturbingly disproportionate, as if they had refocussed the anger and contempt they felt for Clinton during the impeachment squarely onto Gore. Lincoln's civil war ended in a courthouse. This year's pale copy has begun in one, and nobody can be sure that charity will soften its end.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

BANKERS' TRUST

THE GREAT GOLDMAN BEAR HUG



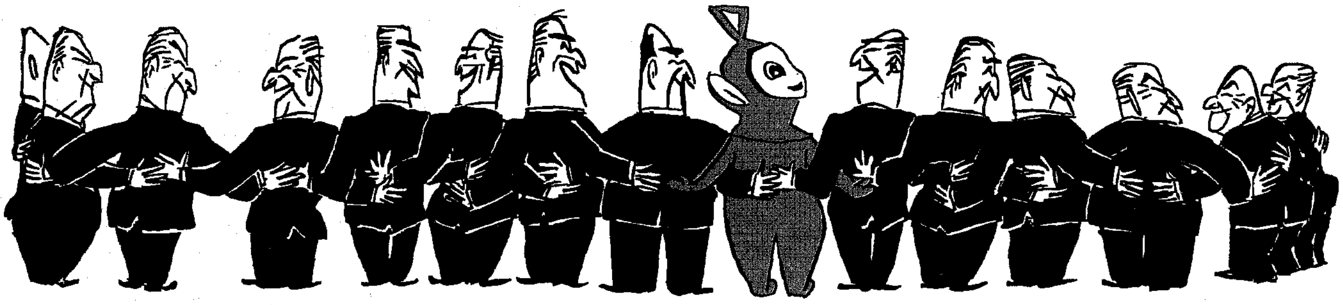
Although, characteristically, they don't like to talk about it, and although, uncharacteristically, they don't seem especially proud of it, the men and women of Goldman Sachs obliterated a world record the other day. The record was for the largest hug—that is, the greatest number of people to engage in a simultaneous embrace. Goldman, accustomed to being the best, set a new high of eight hundred and ninety-nine people. It was, as Tinky Winky might say, a big hug.

The previous hug record of four hundred and sixty-two people was set in 1998, by the Brock Corydon School, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. On many occasions since then, according to the folks at Guinness World Records, Ltd., others have inquired about trying to break it. One such inquiry came to Guinness via E-mail, on November 13th, from Maynard Holt, a Goldman Sachs vice-president in the energy and power group: "I am interested in staging the 'world's largest hug' at an upcoming corporate event on the evening of December 1. Any thoughts!!!!" The next day, Kim Goodwin, an assistant to Guinness's Keeper of the Records, E-mailed him back: "It's great to hear you want to break a record! . . . The following [rules] act as a guide to the specific considerations and undertakings, in addition to the general requirements, for any potential attempt on the 'largest hug.' "

The event Holt had in mind was the firm's annual investment-banking conference in New York, a two-day bonding session attended by about three thousand Goldmanites from around the world. There are a lot of speeches, seminars, and such. There is also entertainment. This year, at a post-conference banquet at the Javits Center, managing directors and their spouses were treated to a performance by Bette Midler, but on the previous night, after a dinner at the Hilton, Goldman employees provided their own diversion—a little corporate comedy, capped by a surprise.

As the festivities at the Hilton drew to a close, Holt, one of the hosts, introduced a young woman named Jerramy Fine, whom Guinness had sent from London. She was, in Guinness-speak, a "hug-invigilator," and she told the crowd that she was there to help them break the world record for the biggest hug. As she stood onstage, the ballroom, cloudy with cigar smoke and general skit-weariness, stirred at the prospect of achievement. The investment bankers went to work. Four young ones, who had been ordered to put on Teletubby costumes, emerged from the wings and began roaming the tables, to put their colleagues in a huggable mood. Twenty others, "hug police" wearing construction helmets with head lamps, and T-shirts over their ties, fanned out with clipboards to round up recruits. Partner or peon, it didn't matter. The big hug was for everyone. Those who signed up were given yellow stickers, which read "One Team, One Hug," and were told to line up along the wall, where they began to form a circle around the ballroom.

Gradually, the circle grew. Teletubbies stood arm in arm with men in suits. Fine announced, "I can now certify that this will be the world's largest hug, if you execute correctly." On either side of the stage, Guinness's official requirements for correct hug execution were displayed on giant screens: "At a given signal, each participant should squeeze the person on either side of them, holding the hug for a minimum of ten seconds." Holt gave the signal. The huggers squeezed. The countdown began. At zero, the song "Lean On



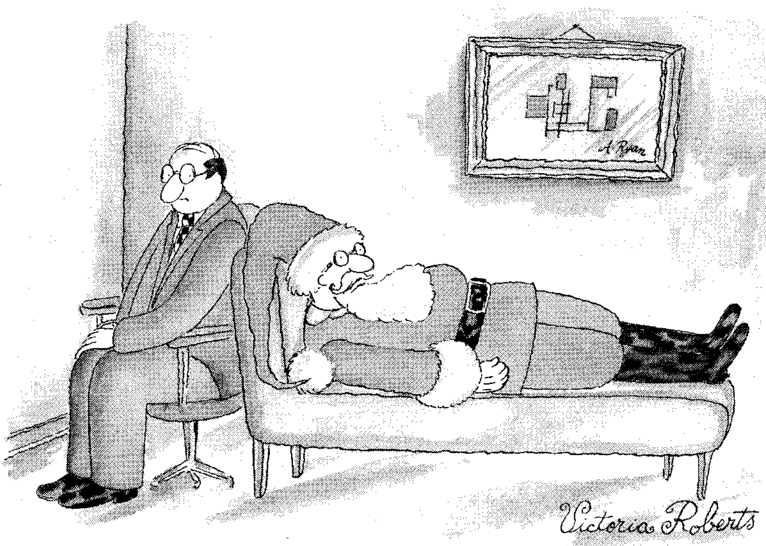
Me" came over the sound system, and the ring of eight hundred and ninety-nine bankers swayed and broke.

In his office a few days later, Holt talked on a speakerphone about the hug. "We initiated it in the humor team," he said. The humor team then sought and received approval from the firm's top partners. "Our senior guys are very supportive of this stuff."

"Goldman has grown a lot," he went on. "The idea was, How do you bring all those people together in a way that says we're still a small family?" You hug.

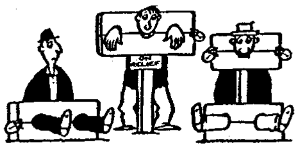
The next step, of course, is for Goldman to take its rightful place in the Guinness book, alongside the guy with the fingernails and some of Guinness's forty-five thousand other recordholders. The firm has a good shot at the 2002 edition—unless a hug war breaks out, and Morgan Stanley gets involved. In the meantime, Guinness is eager to post the record on its Web site. This won't happen, however, until the firm provides Guinness with a photograph of the hug. Up to this point, Goldman has apparently been reluctant to do so. As befits a Wall Street firm practiced in the discreet accumulation of wealth, it wants the record, but it doesn't really want anyone to know about it.

—*Nick Paumgarten*



"Sometimes I don't read my mail."

IN THE CLINK
THE NEW ANGRY MAN



The radicalization of Evan Shapiro may be a minor matter to nervous Republicans, post-Florida. But that's only because they're thinking short-term, which Shapiro is no longer doing. He's thirty-three. Owns and runs a thriving little new-media marketing firm. Looks a lot like Jean-Pierre Léaud in his salad days. Went to the first political demonstration of his life on the Saturday after Election Day. Actually went with his wife, Jill, and their two young daughters. They had heard about the protest, which was in Times Square, on the Internet.

"It was just a little ad-hoc impromptu rally, no political groups involved," Shapiro recalled. The idea was to call for a full and fair count of the votes in Florida, he said, "but people were just standing around. So I started chanting. Just the usual stuff everybody's heard on TV. 'What do we want?' 'Democracy!' 'When do we want it?' 'Now!' You know." Jill, who is less comfortable in the spotlight than her husband, got embarrassed watching him rouse the crowd, and she took the kids home. Later, a friend called to tell her that Evan had been arrested.

The charge was for operating a bullhorn without a permit. Somebody had handed Shapiro a bullhorn, and he had been using it to great effect. The rally had grown, and Shapiro had declined to "shut it down" when a police officer asked him to do so. "From a marketing perspective, you really needed, at that point, to give people something to remember," Shapiro said. "Basically, we needed somebody to get arrested. Of course, I thought there was no way I was going to spend more than a couple of hours in jail."

He spent the night, as did three other men, who had protested his arrest. They were held for sixteen hours at the Midtown South station, and by the time they were taken downtown it was too late to see a judge. Shapiro was furious about this cavalier treatment. He was also frightened. "At 4 A.M., here we were, four middle-class white guys, thrown into the general population of minor offenders—young black males, basically—some of whom had already been in the system for sixty or seventy hours for *very* minor offenses." One fellow-inmate who had been making kissy faces at Shapiro while they were shackled together in a van was of particular concern.

There was a pay phone in the cell, which Shapiro used liberally, and he believes it was a conversation he had with his mother, during which his cellmates overheard the whole story of the demonstration and his arrest, that swung popular opinion in his favor. "We were O.K., they decided." And by midmorning, he said, "there was a raging political debate going on. All forty guys in that cell were participating. The topic was, How vast *is* this conspiracy? I found myself all the way over at the right end of the political spectrum in that group.

"Then the debate became, When is the revolution going to come in this country? And I was just amazed by how much solid information was getting bandied about there on a Sunday morning in a jail cell. At that moment, the idea of a revolution suddenly didn't seem so far-fetched."

We were in Shapiro's company's offices, surrounded by the detritus of Cablevision and HBO promotions. The idea seemed far-fetched again. "But I mean, really, think of a great, charismatic rabble-rouser coming along, and what he could do with all that anger. Because all those guys—or a whole *other* set of guys—are sitting in that cell *right now*. And mainstream white America doesn't know, or want to know, anything about that. We just want to know about

ELECTION HAIKUS

PRETTY PLEASE, COUNT THE VOTES
By Al Gore

A vote is not just
A piece of paper. A vote
Is a human voice.

IN THAT ORDER
By George W. Bush

Dick Cheney and I
Will be the President and
The Vice-President.

—*Paul Slansky*

My Yahoo, my preselected reality, not anyone else's reality."

Shapiro had slipped back into his own reality late that morning. "I pulled my strings, spent a thousand bucks, and was out," he said. His wife was not pleased with him. She had spent an anxious night. The lawyer was expensive. "Plus, I had to cancel our brunch plans." Jill sighed. She is the business manager of Shapiro's company. There is a nice undercurrent of pride and amusement in her gaze, but she is clearly the hardheaded one in the family.

Evan promised Jill that he would not get arrested again, but he immediately set about organizing a rally for the next weekend. The protest, which went off without arrests, remained focussed on the Florida dispute, but Shapiro was already thinking bigger.

"I'm a different person because of this jail experience. You know, we put a nice shiny coat of bright-red paint on the problems in this country because the economy has been good. But there are a lot of dings under there. In fact, there's structural damage. The prison system, race relations—they're a *mess.*"

Photographs were scattered on a table. Taken from a Green Party Web site, they showed Shapiro addressing a crowd in Times Square. He wore a red Gap T-shirt and black Italian loafers. He had a Banana Republic sweater tied around his waist—a Danton for the new millennium.

Shapiro's voice swelled. "From this point forward," he said, "I plan to run my life and my business taking more responsibility. Before this happened, I didn't know who my councilperson was, and they didn't know who I was, but now I do, and they do, because I call them every day. This election is going to end up educating us just like Watergate educated our parents."

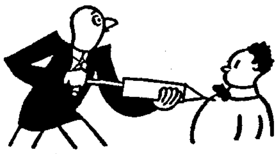
He sounded ready for a bullhorn. There was going to be another election-protest rally in a couple of nights. I asked if he planned to go. We were in his apartment now, on the Upper West Side, and he looked at Jill before answering. He might, he said tentatively. Jill frowned.

"When is it, Thursday?" she asked. " 'Friends' is on Thursday. You hate to miss 'Friends.' "

"That's true," Evan said. "But Jesse Jackson will be there. I gotta hear Jesse Jackson."

—*William Finnegan*

NEXT! THE END OF SWEAT



It was a decade ago that New York's most progressive patrons of plastic surgery began getting their faces Botoxed—that is, treated with botulinum toxin, a virulent poison that, when injected in tiny amounts, temporarily erases frown or smile lines. Lately, a handy new use for the product has been discovered by the fashion-forward crowd: they are having the sweat glands in their armpits Botoxed, thereby preventing unsightly sweat patches. The procedure, which requires enduring dozens of shots with tiny surgical needles, has been adopted by models who don't want to ruin the expensive garments that they are employed to make appear wearable by regular, sweaty folk; and by performers who experience Klieg-light-induced perspiration; and by civilians suffering from excessive dampness. Now that party-dress season is upon us, such things matter more than ever.

A freelance beauty writer who has been Botoxed said last week, "Before the treatment, I would be sitting in my apartment and just get wet rings under my T-shirt. I was getting embarrassing amounts of sweat. Not like stinky sweat, but still." Being Botoxed had greatly relieved the social discomfort caused by her involuntary display of this particular bodily function, she said. "The reason that I had it done was that I was starting to see this guy on a regular basis, and I didn't want to be sweaty around him. Now I don't even have to wear deodorant. Before, I was buying extra-strong men's deodorant. Now I can wear either nothing or one of those pretty deodorants that smell nice."

Botox does not reroute the sweat to another part of the body. Rather, the drug prevents the sweat glands from firing, just as, when used on the face, it paralyzes those muscles whose motility causes crow's-feet. "The way you die from botulism is that the muscles that allow you to breathe are paralyzed," Dr. Alan Matarasso, a plastic surgeon, explained by telephone from his East Side office last week. "In the case of sweating, Botox prevents a neurotransmitter from being released, and when that happens you can't sweat." As long as perspiration can be discharged from other parts of the body, the shuttering of the armpits has no ill effects on the body's ability to regulate its temperature. (Head-to-toe Botoxing is thus not an option.)

There are virtually no side effects to the underarm treatment, although Frederic Brandt, a dermatologist who practices in Miami and New York, says that patients who have their palms Botoxed experience some weakness for a few weeks afterward. "Tasks like buttoning can be more difficult," he said. "I wouldn't do a surgeon. But you don't really get weak under the arms, so you don't have to worry about that."

The effects of the procedure last for about six months, but they take up to a week to kick in, so Botox offers no help for a woman who is worried about her hot date that same night. (It is, however, being added to some bridal to-do lists.) Botox costs around twelve or fifteen hundred dollars for a pair of armpits. "If you think about cleaning bills, it is very cost-effective," Brandt said. "Or think about the cost of a blouse at Gucci." And it is, according to those who have experienced it, relatively painless. The beauty writer, employing the standard fashion-industry metric, says, "It doesn't hurt as much as a Brazilian bikini wax."

—*Rebecca Mead*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE

JACK WELCH, AVERAGE GUY

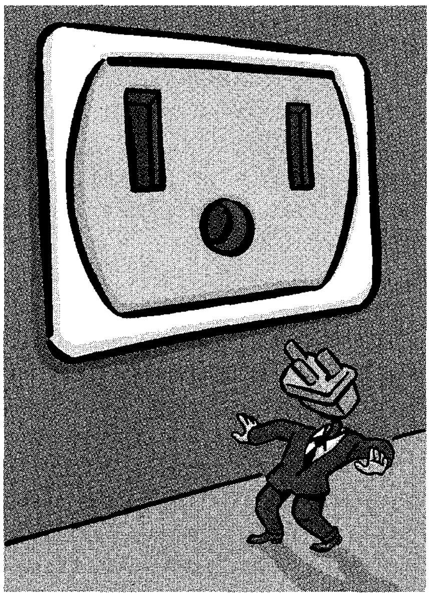
Jeffrey Immelt faces one of the toughest challenges in business history. As the new C.E.O. of General Electric, Immelt must follow in the footsteps of a man who was perhaps the most respected top executive of his time—a man who reinvented G.E. and fashioned a new management structure that became the model for firms around the world. He developed a host of new products, invested heavily in groundbreaking research, and sent the company's revenues and profits soaring. This act, you don't want to follow.

I refer, of course, to Ralph Cordiner, the G.E. head in the postwar years. No, make that Charles Coffin, the company's co-founder. I could have in mind Gerard Swope, who steered G.E. through the Jazz Age and the Great Depression. Or I could be talking about Jack Welch, who a few weeks ago named Immelt as his successor. The truth is that the above description would suit any of these former G.E. chiefs. In the past few years, we've grown accustomed to the idea that Jack Welch is the *über*-C.E.O., the god who single-handedly catapulted G.E. to world dominance. He is the business world's ultimate wiseman-heartthrob, part Yoda, part Ricky Martin. His speeches are mined for aphorisms that take on the shine of Scripture, in books like "Jack Welch Speaks."

But this notion of Welch as superhero—an idea for which Welch is not, by the way, responsible—pales when you look at the performance of his predecessors. By G.E. standards, what Welch has done is par for the course. As Jim Collins, the co-author of the business classic "Built to Last," told me, "Most of Welch's predecessors were the Jack Welches of their time."

Clearly, G.E.'s performance under Welch has been extraordinary. But G.E.'s history is made up of extraordinary performances. The company is the only surviving original member of the Dow Jones Industrial Average. In the twentieth century, G.E. was the industrial equivalent of the mid-century New York Yankees—regardless of who ran the team, it just kept on winning. Take a look at the numbers. G.E. has had only eight top executives in its history. Of the eight, Welch is at the head of the class in creating shareholder value. But in other key categories—earnings growth, return on equity, sales growth—he's closer to the middle of the pack.

Yes, Welch faced down the challenge of running G.E. at a time of increased global competition and rapid technological change. But Charles Coffin kept G.E. afloat during one of the worst depressions in American history (which followed the panic of 1893). He essentially created the country's electricity infrastructure and outmaneuvered a competitor, Westinghouse, whose technology was superior early on. Gerard Swope and Owen Young reinvented G.E. as a consumer-goods powerhouse, then had to find a way to make money during the Great Depression. Ralph Cordiner made G.E. a space-age giant and masterminded its widely imitated decentralization.



It's no coincidence that G.E. has had one exceptional boss after another. There's something about the company that makes its C.E.O.s so good. That something includes its manufacturing acumen and its worldwide distribution networks, as well as its uncanny knack for turning technological innovations into products that sell. Above all, G.E. has been adept at producing excellent managers throughout the organization. The company's Management Development Institute has been called "the Harvard of corporate America," and G.E. has always invested an unusual amount of money and time in training its managers. That's why so many G.E. alumni are running other companies—and why, last week, two of the top contenders for Welch's throne were hired to head Home Depot and 3M. G.E.'s C.E.O. doesn't have to govern alone. He can rely on topnotch executives—a "Praetorian guard," as some have put it—to make sure things go right.

The Welch hype not only obscures just how extraordinary G.E. has been; it also runs counter to Welch's own idea of what a C.E.O. should be, as reflected in the Welchism "Managing better means managing less." Welch has long insisted that, as he said last April, "the idea that one person could run a hundred-and-twenty-billion-dollar company that's in as many different businesses as we're in is outrageous on its face." It seems that the only time folks don't listen when Jack Welch speaks is when he tries to explain that he's not Superman.

That's because Welch's tenure has coincided with the transformation of C.E.O.s from buttoned-down bureaucrats into cultural celebrities. His predecessors were almost universally acclaimed within the business world. Reginald Jones, who anointed Welch, was voted the country's most influential person in business in 1979 and 1980. Coffin, Young, and Cordiner were all revered captains of industry. But none of them were heroes of the culture.

There's nothing wrong with stardust in the executive suite. (Better that Jack Welch be famous than, say, Justin Timberlake.) But the Welch myth teaches all the wrong lessons about how you build a successful corporation, because it suggests that all you have to do is hire the right hard-nosed, charismatic leader. It doesn't work that way. As Max Weber suggested a century ago, organizations thrive over time by abandoning the charismatic model of leadership in favor of one in which power resides in the institution. Or, as the Harvard Business School professor Rakesh Khurana says, "It's not that you don't have leaders. You have many leaders, instead of one." In other words, at a place like G.E., not only is there no "I" in "team" but there's no "I" in "coach," either.

—*James Surowiecki*

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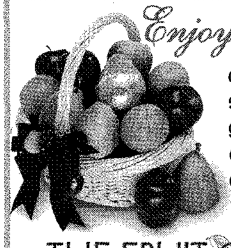
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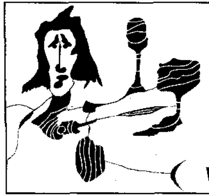
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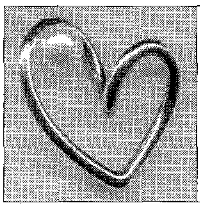
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THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE EMPATHY DEFENSE

Can the University of Michigan save affirmative action?

BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

If you were called upon to invent a perfect university president, you couldn't do better than Lee Bollinger, of the University of Michigan. A handsome, heartlandy blond man in his fifties—one imagines Mickey Mantle in middle age if he wore a business suit and had never taken a drink—Bollinger grew up in out-of-the-way sections of California and Oregon and rose to become a law clerk to Chief Justice Warren Burger, a First Amendment scholar, a law professor, a dean, and a provost. He is respected, public-spirited, and deeply committed to liberal causes. In 1997, he was made president at Michigan, one of the premier public universities in the country, and the place where he had spent most of his career. His timing was not great. Several months into his tenure, the university was hit with two lawsuits by white applicants who said they had been rejected because of their race. These cases, which will be decided in Federal District Court in Michigan imminently and are likely to come before the United States Supreme Court eventually, are an attempt to abolish affirmative action in university admissions, not just at Michigan but nationally. In any account of Bollinger's presidency thus far, the lawsuits, in which he is the named defendant, would have to be the first item.

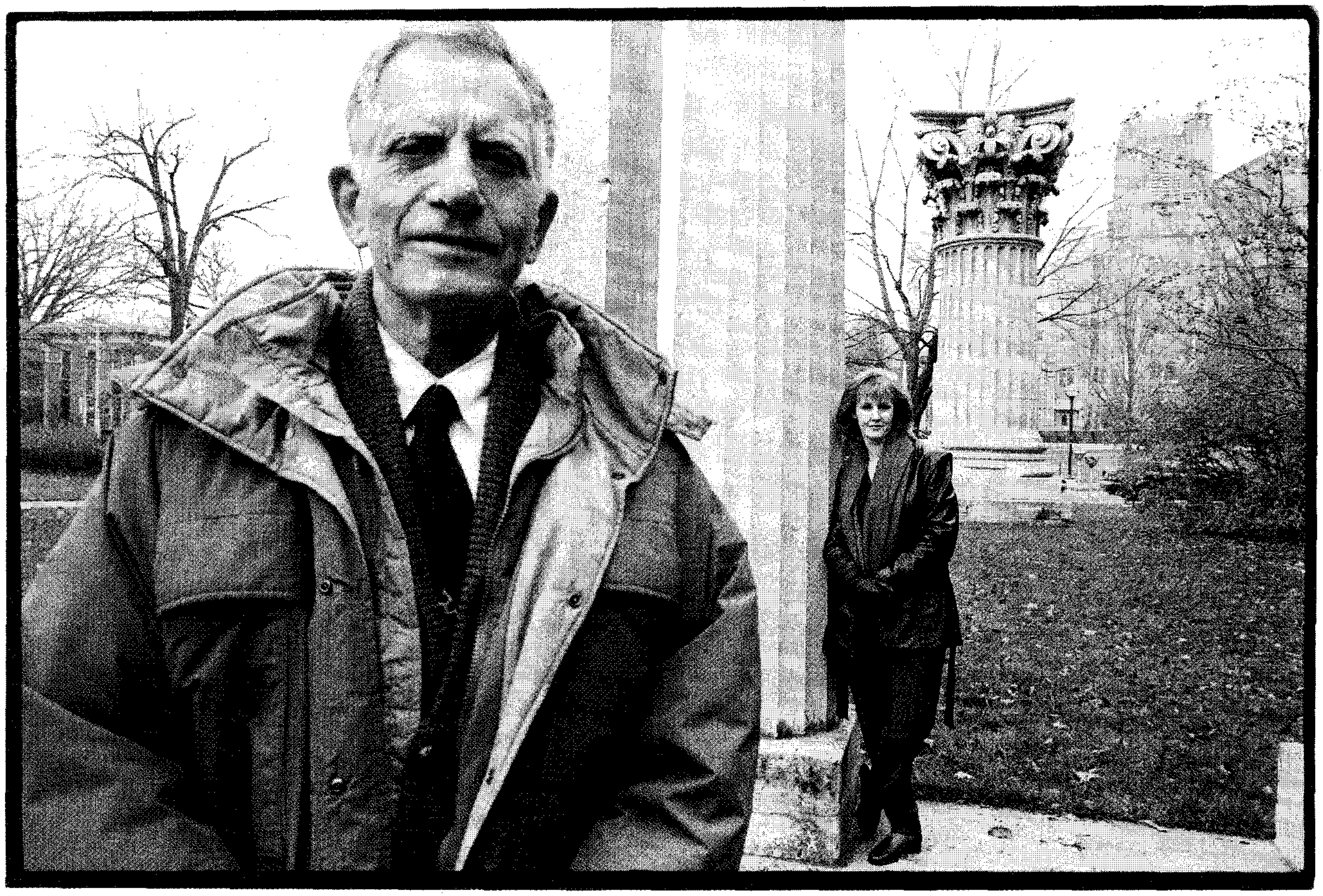
Not long ago, I visited Bollinger at his office in Ann Arbor to talk about the lawsuits. When I asked him why he thinks it's so important to defend affirmative action, he said that it is essential to learning, because it helps students to understand the full complexity of life—to make the empathic leap. Without affirmative action, the minority presence on campus would drop precipitously (this is something everybody agrees on) and, Bollinger said, Michigan's intellectual life would be the poorer for it. "It's exciting to be in an environment where people are different from you," he said. When I asked him for an example of the kind of lesson affirmative action teaches, he thought for a moment and produced a citation from Shakespeare, one meant to demonstrate that if you can really enter someone else's thoughts you'll find them to be subtler and richer than you'd have expected. "I happen to be rereading 'Richard II,'" he said. "I've read it dozens of times. There's an exchange between Gaunt and Bolingbroke, father and son, just as the son is being banished. The advice the father gives the son—how utterly, utterly poignant and convincing it is. The father says, 'Just think of it as a vacation.' It's touching, it's moving—it's the way a loving parent tries to come to terms with the pain of a child. An author with a simple view would just try to describe the pain the father experiences. But to describe it through the effort of the father to tell the son to make good of it!"

That may seem a little recondite as a defense of affirmative action, but the odd legal circumstances favor it. Bollinger loves the theatre, so quoting Shakespeare comes naturally to him; he is building a theatrical complex at the university, the Arthur Miller Theatre, named for Michigan's most famous theatrical alumnus. And perhaps the real point—another way in which affirmative action encourages emotional complexity—is that it causes university presidents to contemplate tragic themes.

The person primarily responsible for the lawsuits at the University of Michigan is a philosophy professor there named Carl Cohen. Cohen, who is in his late sixties, is wiry and raspy, with a military cut and big bright-blue eyes. He is an uncompromising civil libertarian, and, because of a shared interest in the First Amendment, he has known Lee Bollinger for decades. Cohen belongs to a category in politics of people who see themselves as having remained ideologically consistent over the years but who might appear to others to have moved to the right. In his younger days, he wrote for *The Nation;* more recently, he has written for *Commentary.* But ideology may not be his motive at all. "I'm a guy who likes to fight City Hall," Cohen told me recently. "I tend to be rather, how shall we say, *full-blooded* in my defense of free speech." He was the state chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union in the early seventies; a few years later, he defended the right of American Nazis to march in the heavily Jewish suburb of Skokie, Illinois. He has been writing in opposition to affirmative action ever since. Controversy certainly doesn't deter him, and it probably attracts him. What's odd, in fact, is that it took Carl Cohen as long as it did to become a gadfly at his own university, since the University of Michigan has been trying for years to create, in Ann Arbor, a multiracial island in a segregated Michigan sea.

Lee Bollinger's predecessor, James Duderstadt, announced a plan when he took office, in 1988, known as the Michigan Mandate, which one university publication calls "a blueprint for fundamental change in the ethnic composition of the University community"—a change to be brought about by increasing the percentage of minorities. Michigan's gestures toward racial harmony went beyond hiring and admissions. It was one of the first universities in the country to institute a speech code restricting remarks deemed racially insensitive. (The code was struck down in federal court in 1989.) In 1991, Dinesh D'Souza's book "Illiberal Education," which popularized the notion of political correctness as a malign force in university life, used the University of Michigan as one of its prime examples. Carl Cohen, however, did not react publicly to these developments. "I think for psychological reasons I didn't look very closely," he said. "I didn't ask. Maybe I didn't want to know."

Then, in 1995, Cohen read an article in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education,* a publication that generally supports affirmative action but likes to publish ruthlessly candid statistics, showing how much higher the acceptance rates at élite colleges are for blacks with good grades and test scores than they are for whites. "So then I was forced to ask myself the question 'What's happening at the University of Michigan?' " Cohen said. "So I went to my colleagues on the admissions committee and said, 'What are we doing?' They say, 'Can't tell you, Carl. It's confidential.' " Cohen cackled. "Oh, come on! 'Carl, can't tell you.' Now my gorge is rising."


Carl Cohen motivated the lawsuits against Michigan; Barbara Grutter is a plaintiff. Photograph by Michelle Andonian.

As a public institution, the University of Michigan is subject to the state Freedom of Information Act. Cohen filed a FOIA request for the admissions criteria by race. "The first response was 'No documents are responsive to your request,' " he said. "Nothing would have been better calculated to get me angry than that. Do they think they're playing with children? Now my gorge is getting tight. I make an appointment with the FOIA officer. Finally, he says, 'I see your point. Give me another crack at this.' "

Cohen showed me some documents that his request had yielded. A premedical program had an explicitly lower grade and test-score cutoff for minorities: the combined Scholastic Aptitude Test score cutoff, below which an applicant would be rejected, was 1320 for most whites and 1170 for minorities. A chart providing guidelines for undergraduate admissions officers presents one set of standards for whites and another, lower set for minorities; for example, a minority applicant with a 3.5 grade-point average and a combined S.A.T. score of 1200 would automatically be accepted, and a white applicant with the same numbers would probably be rejected. A quarter of whites with grade-point averages between 2.8 and 3.0 were accepted; three-quarters of minorities with the same averages were accepted. At the Michigan law school, among applicants with college grade-point averages between 3.25 and 3.49 and L.S.A.T. scores between 156 and 158, one of fifty-one whites was accepted and ten of ten blacks. Since Cohen kicked up a fuss, Michigan has got rid of printed matrices spelling out in explicit detail different admissions standards by race, but it still gives minority undergraduate applicants numerical bonus points.

"I took these documents, and I wrote up a report," Cohen said. "I gave a copy to the president of the university. I wrote each regent personally and sent the report. Do you know the response I received?" He made a circle of a thumb and index finger. "Not even an acknowledgment. What can they say? Can they admit it? No. Can they deny it? No. But copies of the report were around now. I got a call from a legislator in Lansing. Would I come up and testify? Sure."

In the summer of 1997, a group of Republican state legislators held a press conference denouncing the university's admissions policies. They publicly invited rejected white and Asian applicants to come forward and lend their names to lawsuits against the university. A Washington organization called the Center for Individual Rights, which litigates against affirmative action all over the country, came in as a legal adviser. Within a few months, the center had filed two lawsuits: Gratz v. Bollinger, the undergraduate case, and Grutter v. Bollinger, the law-school case.

GWENDOLYN BROOKS
(1917-2000)

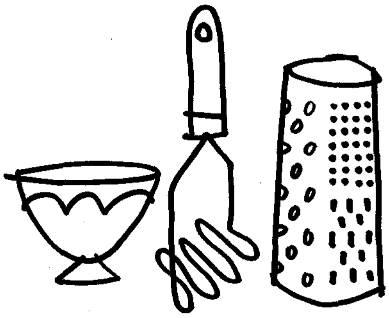
Sometimes I see in my mind's eye a four- or five-
year-old boy, coatless and wandering
a windblown and vacant lot or street in Chicago
on the windblown South Side. He disappears
but stays with me, staring and pronouncing
me guilty of an indifference more callous
than neglect, condescension as self-pity.

Then I see him again, at ten or fifteen, on the corner,
say, 47th and Martin Luther King, or in a group
of men surrounding a burning barrel off Lawndale,
everything surrounding vacant or for sale.
Sometimes I trace him on the train to Joliet
or Menard, such towns quickly becoming native
ground to these boys who seem to be nobody's
sons, these boys who are so hard to love, so hard
to see, except as case studies.

Poverty, pain, shame, one and a half million
dreams deemed fit only for the most internal
of exiles. That four-year-old wandering
the wind tunnels of Robert Taylor, of Cabrini
Green, wind chill of an as yet unplumbed degree—
a young boy she did not have to know to love.

—*Anthony Walton*

Barbara Grutter, the lead plaintiff in the law-school case, which goes before a Federal District Court judge in Detroit next month, comes from a different corner of American culture than the one occupied by the great liberal universities. She lives in a meticulously neat house in a new subdivision between Detroit and Ann Arbor. She is the daughter of a minister in the Calvinist Christian Reformed Church, one of nine children, and the only one who did not receive an undergraduate degree at a Christian college. She married at the age of nineteen, worked at clerical jobs to put herself through Michigan State, and ran a consulting business out of her house while her children were small, so that she could be with them. In 1996, in early middle age, she decided to apply to a program at the University of Michigan that offers a joint degree in health-care management—her career up to that point—and law. She also applied to the law school at Wayne State University, in Detroit. Wayne State accepted her immediately, on the basis of her grades and test scores, and offered her a scholarship. Michigan put her on the waiting list. Then the news of Carl Cohen's findings broke. Several weeks later, Michigan rejected her. She telephoned one of the state representatives who had publicly called for plaintiffs and agreed to become one.



Grutter is the furthest thing from a combative intellectual like Carl Cohen. A petite, fine-featured blonde, she gives the impression of having encountered a system she had no idea existed. "We have always conscientiously taught our children that discrimination is wrong—morally wrong and illegal," she told me when I went to see her at home and asked her why she had sued. "Here I was in a situation where something else was happening. Is what I'm teaching them a platitude, or is it real? I think how I react teaches them something. I could whine. I could be angry—actually, I am angry. I could be bitter. I could be apathetic. That's not what I wanted to teach my kids. Or I could show them something positive." A little later, she summarized the university's position, as it appears to her: " 'We, in our arrogance, can deny your rights as an individual. Because we want to enhance somebody's experience.' To say they want to totally disregard my rights—to me that's astounding. This is a public institution. It's institutionalized discrimination."

The controlling legal authority in the Michigan cases is the Supreme Court's 1978 decision in University of California Regents v. Bakke. On the difficult questions where the country most needs some guidance, the Supreme Court has often been able to issue decisions—such as Brown v. Board of Education—that serve as clarion calls. Bakke is as far from that as it's possible to get. A few years before Bakke, the Court considered at length an almost identical case called DeFunis v. Odegaard (which was, by the way, the subject of Carl Cohen's last article for *The Nation*) and couldn't make up its mind. (The plaintiff went almost all the way through the University of Washington law school while his case was in court, and it wound up moot.) Then, in Bakke, a case involving an applicant named Allan Bakke and the medical school at the University of California at Davis, the Court decided to consider two questions separately. On the question of whether the university could set aside a small number of places for minorities only, as the medical school at Davis had done, it ruled against, five to four. On the question of whether the university could take minority race into account as a plus factor, it ruled in favor, five to four. The decision did lead to Allan Bakke's admission to medical school—today he is a doctor in Minnesota—but on the larger question it communicated uncertainty.

The swing vote on Bakke was the late Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr. In his opinion, Powell relied heavily on friend-of-the-court briefs written by Ivy League universities, particularly one from Harvard, whose admissions policy Powell appended to his opinion. They described a procedure in which a substantial team of people read and discuss each application and consider minority race, in some unquantifiable way, as a means of achieving "ethnic diversity" in the student body. In close situations, being black or Hispanic can, in Harvard's words, "tip the balance." The problem with Powell's decision is that only a tiny minority of universities actually run their admissions offices in the Harvard manner. Big state schools process thousands of applications through small offices, which can't possibly conduct the kind of soft-edged discussion of every

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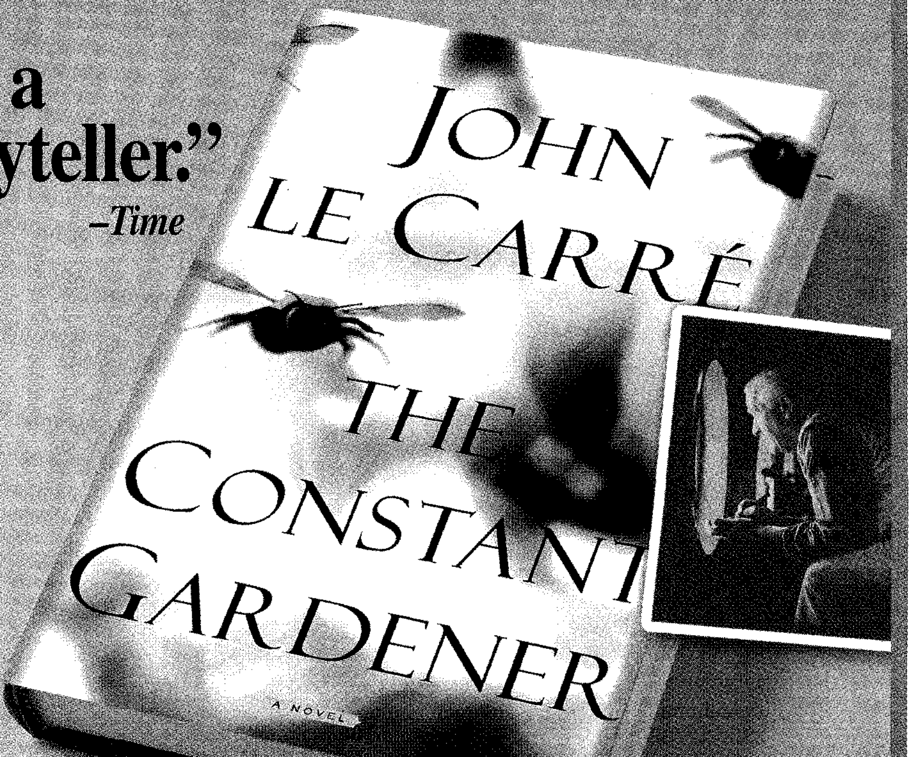

applicant envisioned in Powell's decision. Instead, they often treat applications in the purely numerical way that Carl Cohen found at Michigan, with statistical matrices and score cutoffs.

Minorities get extra points at Michigan because, on average, they get lower grades and, especially, lower standardized test scores. A race-blind, by-the-numbers admissions operation at an élite university will produce an almost all white and Asian class. To enrich the mixture and to keep its political relations in good order, Michigan gives extra points in admission to applicants from rural areas, to athletes, to Michigan residents, to children of alumni, to children of big shots (that category falls under "Provost's discretion"), to children of "socio-economic disadvantage," and to men contemplating a career in nursing. But for these preferences the university has not been accused of unconstitutional practices.

The admissions system on display in Carl Cohen's FOIA documents may not be a violation of the letter of the Bakke decision, since Michigan did not set aside a precise number of places for minorities. But by putting applicants into different categories of consideration on the basis of their race it does appear to violate the spirit of Powell's decision, which decries "racial classification." But even if Michigan was in compliance with the Bakke precedent it might all seem beside the point. The lawsuits, after all, want Bakke reversed, which puts the university in the position of having to defend both Bakke and its own policies.

That is an especially difficult project, because Justice Powell offered only one, somewhat vague justification for affirmative action in admissions: "ethnic diversity." As Powell's decision says, "People do not learn very much when they are surrounded only by the likes of themselves." Michigan has been forced by the wording of the Bakke decision to construct a full-dress defense of diversity as an educational value on campus. That, in part, is why Lee Bollinger quoted Shakespeare to me. One of Michigan's legal briefs, written by Walter Dellinger, who is a law professor at Duke, a former Assistant Attorney General, and one of the most prominent liberal lawyers in the country, says that diversity "will enhance the cognitive learning process." An ambitious study produced for Michigan's defense by Patricia Gurin, the head of the university's psychology department, says that diversity encourages "effortful thinking" rather than "automatic thinking." Everything—*everything;* losing this case in the Supreme Court would mean the end of affirmative action not just at Michigan but, immediately, at all state universities, and possibly at all private universities, too—depends on Michigan's demonstrating that people learn more on an integrated campus than on a segregated one. Bakke won't really allow for any other argument to be made.

The argument that Michigan is making in the lawsuits may be a necessity, but that doesn't mean it's insincere. The university has worked hard for years to integrate itself, and now, at twelve per cent African-American and Hispanic, it is more integrated than the high schools and communities that most of the students came from. Most students probably have the first significant interracial contact of their lives at the university, and hence their first direct experience with the hardest, richest, most troublesome question in American history. As several administrators pointed out to me, it is much healthier to have enough minorities at Michigan for there to be obvious differences of opinion among them than to have an excruciatingly self-conscious handful who feel they have to uplift the race at every turn.

Dinesh D'Souza and other opponents of affirmative action portray it as encouraging race-consciousness and segregation on campuses, but abolishing it gets rid of that problem in the bluntest possible way, by insuring that there is no critical mass of minorities at a school like Michigan and that whites simply aren't confronted with any startlingly different minority points of view. The lawsuits to abolish affirmative action have certainly not served to decrease racial tension on campus.

Even granting the importance of the intellectual value of empathy, you get the feeling that there is a lot more at stake here. In the late sixties and early seventies, universities adopted affirmative-action policies enthusiastically, voluntarily, and en masse. Today, more than thirty national higher-education organizations—for example, the Association of American Universities and the Association of American Law Schools—have publicly endorsed the University of Michigan. So has former President Gerald Ford, a Michigan alumnus. Derek Bok and William Bowen, retired presidents of Harvard and Princeton, respectively, have devoted much of their lives for the past several years to the defense of affirmative action. The big guns have been rolled out, and that's because the real issue at hand is also the most fundamental one: the way that American higher education sees itself.

Barbara Grutter, personally and as a litigant, sees universities as a kind of personnel office for the United States. They hand out valuable tickets to individual advancement, and their highest obligation is to do so fairly. Universities don't see themselves in this way. They believe that their main purposes are the traditional ones: pursuing scholarship and learning, and training students to go forth and improve the world. Affirmative action is easy to justify if you understand universities the way they understand themselves. In a society bedevilled by racial tension, they have a duty to become sites of interracial understanding, and to insure future peace and progress by making sure there will be black lawyers and judges and doctors and teachers and executives. They are not obliged to populate themselves according to a blind objective standard, in honor of the individual right to admission. These aren't arguments that you can explicitly make in defending a legal challenge to the Bakke decision, but they implicitly underlie Michigan's feeling that ending affirmative action would be, in the Shakespearean sense evoked by Lee Bollinger, tragic.

Universities are not blameless victims, struggling to overcome the mistaken impression that they exist to distribute opportunity to those who most deserve it. American universities have elided the question of their purpose by holding themselves up as the fulfillers of every conceivable educational and social mission. They would generate individual success and also social progress. They would be democratic and also selective. They would promote scholarship and also economic development. They would be funded by government but be allowed to govern themselves. This kind of broad-spectrum promise has powerful advantages—it has made modern American universities richer and more influential than universities have ever been—but it also sets the stage for conflicts when all those purposes clash. Affirmative action occupies the point of maximum stress.

That is not to say that because affirmative action is under fire universities must now firmly decide and declare what they stand for. They won't. They're too big, and life is too complicated. Lee Bollinger is eloquent in describing what he wants affirmative action to accomplish, but how was the public supposed to know that empathy, rather than admissions, or football, or academic publishing, was the most valued product at the University of Michigan?

One of the people I spoke with in Ann Arbor was Ralph Williams, an English professor who is an ardent supporter of affirmative action. He has an office nestled under the eaves of the grand entrance to a building, so that you can see a row of capitals of Greek columns outside his window. He sat at a metal government-issue desk. I thought that I could get him to dismiss the notion of universities as dispensers of tickets to success, but he wouldn't. "Like many a tension, like many a paradox, it seems to be a paradox that cannot be resolved," Williams said. He is a long, lanky man, whose hands fly around as he talks. "It can only be managed. I am told there are tensions between genders. There is a tension between body and mind. There is the problem of evil in the world. As far back as I can go, universities have been institutions of social and economic advancement, and recognized as such." He pointed out that Cicero sent his son to study in Athens in part to acquire prestige, and that Petrarch's father had him educated for reasons of hoped-for advancement, not intellectual development. "The American university can respond to the society without having to be answerable to it," he said. "If we think we're going to solve the issue, we're letting ourselves in for a deep fallacy and a cheap pratfall."

But the courts, unavoidably, have to come down on one side or the other of the issue that Williams says, persuasively, the universities can't solve. Affirmative action in university admissions is the best example of a question that will probably be settled by the composition of the Supreme Court—a much better example than the legality of abortion (sorry, Ms. Streisand). The current court usually splits five-to-four on affirmative-action cases. The Michigan cases could come before it toward the end of the next Presidential term, after its composition may have changed just enough for the balance to swing one way or the other. The future of affirmative action lies in the hands of the next President. ♦

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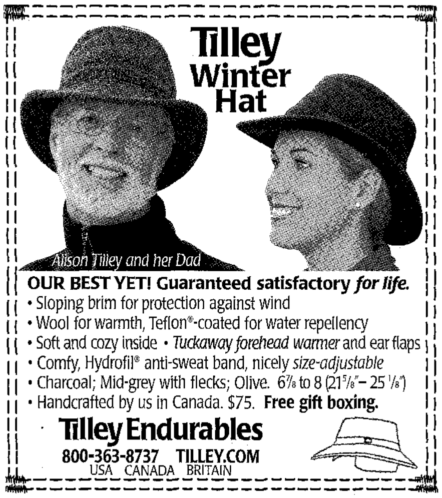
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SHOUTS & MURMURS

PROFILES IN COMMON SENSE

BY PAUL RUDNICK

On July 2, 1993, chambermaid Rosalita Vasquez was finishing her shift at the exclusive Casa Del Sol resort in Cancún when she saw smoke pouring from beneath the door of the hotel's Grand Imperial Suite. A malfunction in the air-conditioning system had started the blaze, and the suite's residents, seventy-five-year-old real-estate mogul Harvey Trestle and his wife, Lenore, were lying unconscious in their beds. As choking soot filled the hallway, Rosalita raced to the hotel's front desk and quit.

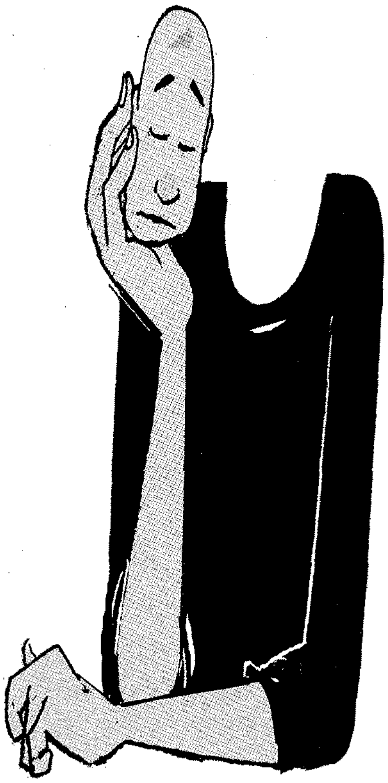
On September 21, 1995, Air Force pilot Ted Benning was a passenger on a commercial 747, flying from Miami to Los Angeles. The plane's pilot had a heart attack and collapsed, and Ted, who had flown fifty-eight missions in Vietnam, beckoned to the flight attendant and said, "Too bad I'm not a doctor."

On May 7, 2000, as Barbara and Mitch Everly were driving through a torrential rainstorm in Commack, Long Island, they spotted a drenched, shivering cocker spaniel, paralyzed with fear at a busy intersection. They stopped their Lexus, and Mitch leaped out. When he ran back to the car, soaked to the bone, he told Barbara, "It's O.K., he's not ours."

On July 23, 1991, sixteen-year-old Sara Suthcott, an Olympic skiing hopeful, lost both her legs to juvenile diabetes. A team of doctors, donating their time, fitted her with prosthetics, and, within six months, owing to what her surgeon called "Sara's unquenchable spirit," she had decided to sue him.

When teacher George Gruber told his sixth graders in Norbet, Massachusetts, about a one-room, cinder-block schoolhouse in Namibia that couldn't afford even the most basic textbooks, the children all decided that this sounded really cool.

On March 10, 1996, sixty-eight-year-old Sharon Heilbrun was reunited with her identical-twin sister, Marsha, whom she had not seen in more than sixty-five years. After they embraced, in the Ambassador Lounge at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, Sharon, her eyes brimming, said, "Until this moment, I never realized I was so homely."



Over the past forty years, Grace and Hal Parteers, of Mount Kisco, New York, have opened their home to seventy-eight foster children, particularly youngsters with developmental disorders and other mental handicaps. When asked why she and her husband had such a lasting fondness for hard-to-place kids, Mrs. Parteers said, "Because you can lie to them." ◆

ISTVAN BANYAI

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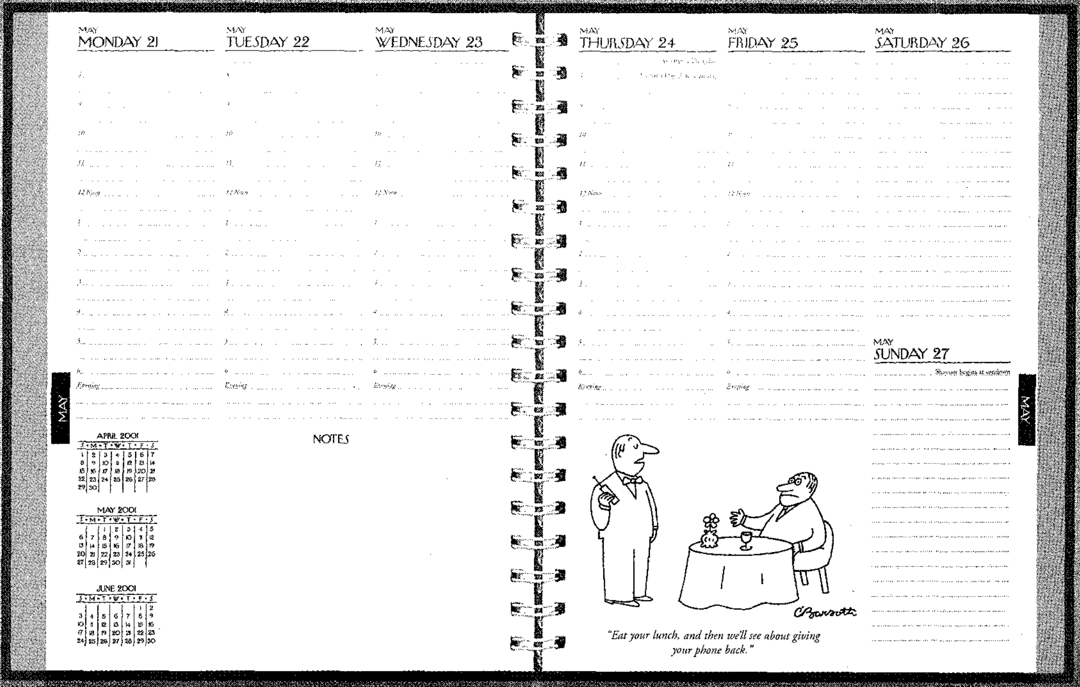
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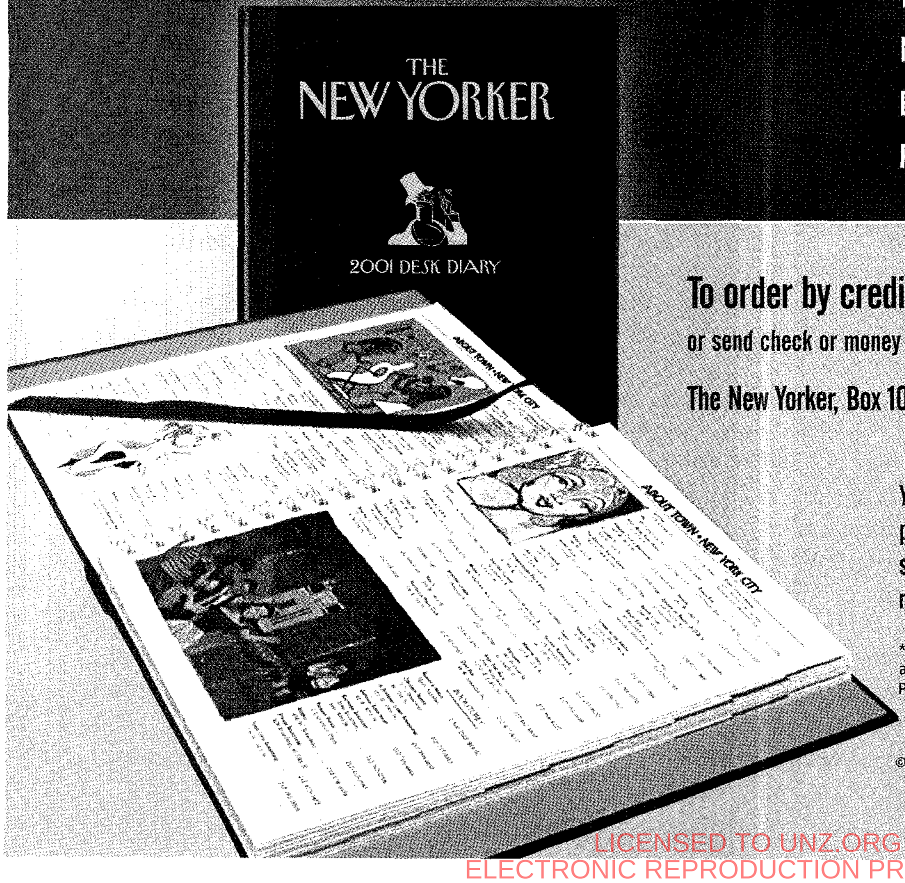
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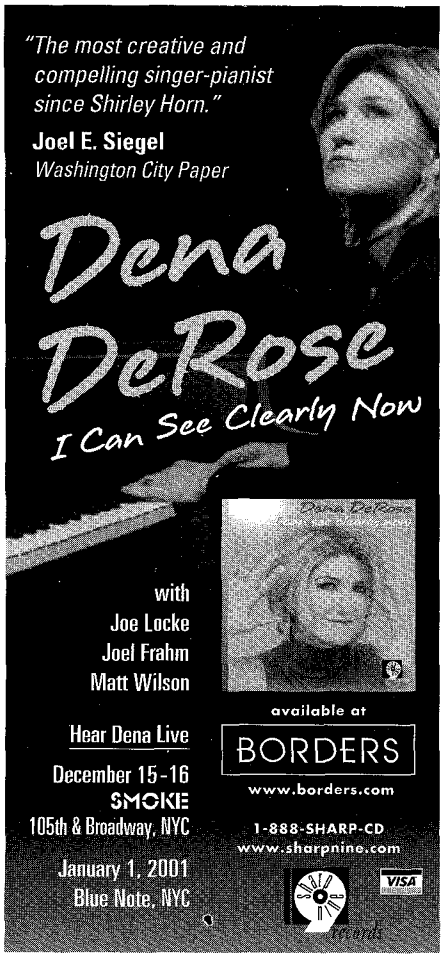
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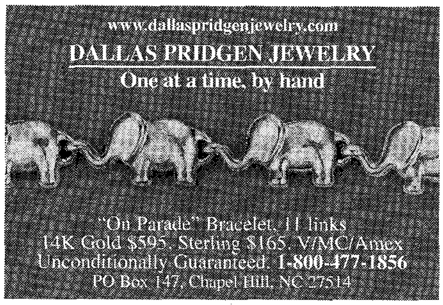
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LETTER FROM TBILISI

RAINY DAYS IN GEORGIA

Eduard Shevardnadze is a Western hero. What's gone wrong in his own country?

BY MICHAEL SPECTER

Late on the afternoon of August 29, 1995, Eduard A. Shevardnadze, the Georgian head of state, walked out of the Parliament Building, in the capital city of Tbilisi, and climbed into the back seat of his car for a long-awaited ride. He was about to sign a document that he had thought he might never see: a democratic constitution for his country. Georgia had become an independent nation just four years earlier, with the collapse of the Soviet Union; since then, it had endured a civil war (over the separatist region of Abkhazia) and two other serious uprisings. The nation's economy had virtually collapsed, violence was widespread, and relations with Russia were poisonous.

Yet by that summer Georgians had begun to hope for better times. The street fighting had ebbed, farmers were working again, and Russia seemed to be leaving its neighbor alone. Most of that progress was due to Shevardnadze, who by force of will, coupled with an uncanny ability to find consensus even among people who seemed to detest one another, governed Georgia then as he governs it today: decisively and alone.

The constitution ceremony was scheduled to begin at 7 P.M. But as Shevardnadze's car made its way from the Parliament Building, a man perched in a nearby apartment block detonated a remote-control bomb that set the vehicle on fire, sending shards of glass through the air. Shevardnadze stumbled into the street, stunned and bleeding. That night, Georgians watched on television as he spoke from the hospital. His face covered with cuts, Shevardnadze stared vacantly at the camera and told the nation, "They want the Mafia to run this country. They will not succeed. This is the last act of terrorism in Georgia. The whole nation will rise and raze them to the ground."

It was a remarkable performance, and much of what Shevardnadze promised has come to pass. Terrorism is no longer a daily threat. Parliament is run not by thugs but by a thirty-seven-year-old democrat named Zurab Zhvania, who made his mark as an environmental activist. What's more, Shevardnadze has fashioned a lucrative deal with the West to send oil from the Caspian Sea across Georgian territory, turning the country into a station along a new Silk Road. To achieve this success, Shevardnadze drew on the full and often contradictory arsenal of his political talents: he was pragmatic enough to negotiate with killers and ruthless enough to side with the most successful among them.

Georgia today is a more tranquil place than it was on that summer day when the bomb went off—in no small part because the country is, in a sense, a highly dependent duchy of the United States. American leaders, for both practical and sentimental reasons, revere Shevardnadze. Last year, the United States provided nearly a hundred and fifty million dollars in aid, almost a third of the Georgian budget. Over the past decade, only Israel has regularly received significantly more money per person from Washington. Despite Georgia's efforts to establish a democracy, in other respects its progress has been slight: tax revenues are anemic; and last year Transparency International, an independent monitor of international ethics, placed Georgia eighty-fifth out of a hundred on its list of the world's most corrupt countries. Nearly everything that should be earned in a free society through merit is blatantly for sale, from college diplomas and drivers' licenses to the right to vote.

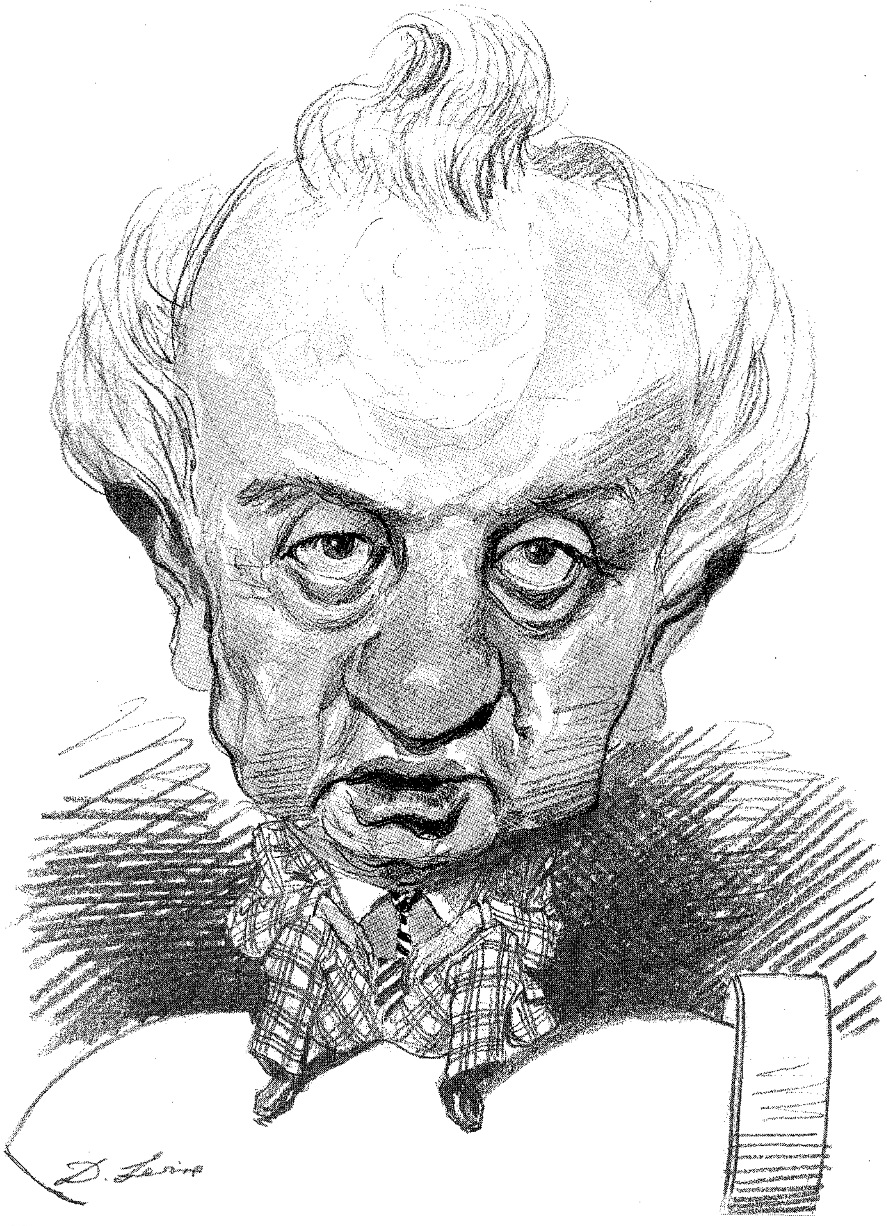
Not long ago, I asked former Secretary of State James A. Baker III why Georgia, with five million people, was so vital to American interests. Armenia has a far larger and more influential

DAVID LEVINE

American diaspora, and Azerbaijan has one of the world's great reserves of oil. Baker told me that by 1991 it had become clear to the Bush Administration that new institutions were about to form out of the wreckage of the Communist world, and that America had been handed a rare opportunity to influence them. "If there was one special place in that region, one country above all that we knew we needed to help, it was Georgia," Baker told me. "Getting the oil out matters, and so does Georgia's physical and cultural position in the world. But obviously you cannot think about that country without thinking about Eduard Shevardnadze. I am not sure that the Cold War could have ended peacefully without him. He changed all our lives. And when we thought about that part of the world we never forgot it. The man's a hero."

The world first became aware of Shevardnadze in 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev, the new leader of the Soviet Union, asked his old friend to replace Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, one of the last of the hard-line Soviets. One evening the previous winter, at Pitsunda, a resort on the Black Sea coast favored by the Soviet bosses, the two had spoken at length; and Gorbachev had said, "We cannot go on living like this"—in Soviet society. "Everything is rotten." Shevardnadze replied, "It has to be changed."

Shevardnadze, who is seventy-two, was an unlikely radical. He had grown up in the rural Georgian village of Mamati in the thirties, during the worst of the purge years. Yet his allegiance to Stalin never wavered, and by the time he was twenty, in 1948, he had joined the Party. Shevardnadze, the youngest of five children, was a talented student and his parents urged him to become a doctor. Instead, he chose politics. He advanced rapidly—by 1972, he had become the Georgian Party leader—not just because he shut down opponents but also because he ran a harsh public campaign against corruption.



Shevardnadze is increasingly seen as a cause of Georgia's problems, not the solution.

Georgians prospered during Soviet times, but they did so by playing angles, avoiding rules, and breaking laws. (Almost invariably, in Soviet films the mobsters were Georgian.) Their produce, their wine, and even their mineral water were prized in Moscow, which opened up many opportunities for bribery. Shevardnadze, however, realized that an economy based on theft was bound to fail. Not long after taking over as Party boss, he called a meeting of his deputies and asked them to raise their hands if they agreed that he should launch a war on corrupt officials. Every hand shot into the air. Then Shevardnadze asked the deputies to keep their arms raised as he circled the room checking wrists. Anyone wearing something better than a cheap Soviet timepiece was fired.

Shevardnadze supported intellectuals when other Communist leaders tried to put them in prison. During the Brezhnev era, films that one could never see in Moscow were routinely—if discreetly—on view in Tbilisi. The filmmaker Tengiz Abuladze, who began writing his anti-Stalinist epic "Repentance" in 1981, never considered making the film until Shevardnadze encouraged him to proceed.

"This is a Shakespearean sort of country," Georgia's best-known director, Robert Sturua, said when I spoke with him one evening in Tbilisi. "And our leader is the most Shakespearean among us, with all his flaws and all the gifts. Shevardnadze supported us when it was impossible for him to do it. You can't imagine how rare it was—a Communist with respect for free speech."

When Shevardnadze was named Foreign Minister, he had rarely been out of the Soviet Union, and many diplo-

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"You should go and talk to Santa, dear, even though you feel he screwed you last year."

• •

mats were shocked. He asserted himself immediately, though, leading the reformist wing of Gorbachev's politburo; and in the period between 1988 and 1990 he travelled frequently between Moscow and Washington, entering into a remarkably open personal relationship with his American counterpart, James Baker.

"I decided by May of '89 that this was somebody whose word was good, whom you could trust completely," Baker said. "He felt like something dramatic was going to come, and that they ought to make it happen in an orderly and peaceful way."

But by December of 1990, Gorbachev's most passionate idealist had had enough of the reactionary intrigue in the Kremlin. He appeared before the Congress of People's Deputies and announced that a "dictatorship is coming," and that he had no choice but to resign. The warning seemed alarmist, but it presaged the coup attempt of August, 1991. "Let this be my protest against what is happening," Shevardnadze told the startled deputies before walking out of the hall. The speech marked the end of Gorbachev's most progressive period of leadership. Within two years, Shevardnadze would return to Georgia, and find himself in charge of a government so medieval and divided that legislators had to be forbidden to carry guns into Parliament. Yet by 1995—when the car bomb exploded in Tbilisi—Shevardnadze, by negotiating, compromising with gangsters, doing everything but actually waging another war, had managed to pull Georgia back from the edge of anarchy.

Except for the protruding, burning hazel eyes and the occasionally errant wisps of white hair—which give him a haunted look—Eduard Shevardnadze is an open and unassuming man. He is quiet and reflective, and I couldn't find an aide who remembered the last time he had raised his voice. He always seems to be alone, even when he is not. In Tbilisi, his routine seldom varies: each morning at eight-thirty, he settles into an armor-plated Mercedes that the German government donated after the first attempt on his life (there was another, in 1998). Shevardnadze rarely gets home before 10 P.M. His friends are his colleagues. He sometimes attends the opening of a play or a concert with his wife, Nanuli. But he does almost nothing but work. (I asked one of his closest aides, Peter Mamradze, if I could spend some time with Shevardnadze outside the office. He looked at me, smiled, and said, "Not unless you plan to sleep with him.")

After Shevardnadze resigned and the Soviet Union collapsed, he could have embarked on an entirely new life. He was invited to lecture for handsome fees at universities around the world; he was offered foundation jobs. None of it appealed to him. He spent most of 1991 at a Moscow think tank that he had founded and then returned, briefly, to his position at the Foreign Ministry. By then, though, the chemistry between him and Gorbachev was gone, and he soon left for good. After that, for whatever reason—patriotism, ego, pride, or, more likely, a mixture of them all—Shevardnadze felt that he had only one choice. "I thought about what I would do next," he told his longtime aide and interpreter, Pavel Palezchenko. "Return to Georgia? Well, a different kind of people are in charge there now, and the attitude toward me has changed. But I cannot retire and do nothing."

Georgia's first post-Soviet President, the mystical nationalist fanatic Zviad Gamsakhurdia, had driven the nation into civil war. By the fall of 1991, he couldn't control the fighting on the streets of his own capital; eventually, a Mafia dandy named Jaba Ioseliani, who ran a gang called the Mkhedrioni—Horsemen—overcame Gamsakhurdia, who fled in January, 1992, to the Chechen capital, Grozny, across the mountain pass that serves as the border between Georgia and Russia. By New Year's Eve in 1993, under circumstances that have never been fully explained, Gamsakhurdia either committed suicide or was killed. By then, Ioseliani and his gang were in charge.

Even in the rich tradition of Caucasian bandits, Ioseliani stands out: he had spent much of his life in prison, dressed like an industrial baron, and was a playwright, novelist, and former drama teacher. He is known in Tbilisi as both a Mafia leader and a politician, and, in his case, it is impossible to separate the two. In 1991, many people had tried to persuade Shevardnadze to return to Georgia, but while Gamsakhurdia remained in office he didn't want to appear to be planning a coup. A year later, when Shevardnadze arrived in Tbilisi, Ioseliani became his chief confidant and emissary to international meetings. Ioseliani and his crew may have been venal, but they provided the force that Shevardnadze needed to defeat gangs that were more dangerous.

By then, Georgia was falling apart. Warfare had taken hold in the province of South Ossetia. It was worse in Abkhazia, where Muslim separatists had expelled two hundred thousand ethnic Georgians. The battle there continued for nearly two years, and Shevardnadze found himself in the middle of it. When the Abkhazian capital, Sukhumi, finally fell, in the autumn of 1993, Shevardnadze, who not long before had had millions of men and thousands of nuclear weapons at his disposal, stood sweating in muddied combat fatigues and watched helplessly as young Georgian soldiers bled to death beside him. When I asked him how he felt about returning from Moscow, he replied, "It felt like I had been dipped in boiling tar."

Shevardnadze has often spoken about what he had to do to end Georgia's civil war, and his relationship with Ioseliani was his most obvious compromise. It was an alliance that was destined to unravel. Shevardnadze tried to disband the Mkhedrioni as early as 1993, but he wasn't successful until after the first assassination attempt, in 1995. At that point, Ioseliani was sent to prison, although no evidence of his involvement was ever produced.

Ioseliani, who is in his early seventies, was released after Shevardnadze's reëlection this spring, and not long ago I went to visit him at his sporty new clubhouse, which was built in the middle of one of Tbilisi's most popular parks. He wore a double-breasted linen jacket over a fashionable shirt with no collar; his gray hair was perfectly trimmed, as were his fingernails. I asked him if he had anything to do with the 1995 assassination attempt. He spat on the floor, focussed his eyes on me, and said, "Believe me, I wouldn't have missed."

Georgia's appeal to the West is obvious: it is a Christian enclave in a largely Muslim part of the world, and, because it is able to accommodate pipelines running from Baku to Turkey, it can help the West diversify its oil supply while increasing its influence in Central Asia. Turning the country into a buffer to keep Russia from asserting imperialistic ambitions would be an extra benefit. Shevardnadze works hard at the task; Georgia has gained entry to the Council of Europe, and Shevardnadze has said that in a few years he will "knock on NATO's door," a goal that even he realizes Georgia is unlikely to achieve.

Georgia belongs more to the West than any other Asian country, yet it takes more of its heritage from the steppes than any Western nation. As Rezo Gabriadze, a prominent director and screenwriter, said to me one night as we sipped Turkish coffee in the café that he owns in Tbilisi's old town, "Georgia is not Asia and it's not Europe. It is part of a Mediterranean culture that begins in Gibraltar and ends in my café."

The Western presence, however, is growing rapidly. The streets of Tbilisi are crammed with S.U.V.s driven by international officials, both American and European; there are also representatives of many humanitarian-aid groups and various agencies of the United Nations, as well as a full complement of oilmen, hustlers, development experts, communications specialists, and spies. At nearly every meal, the dining room at Betsy's—Tbilisi's best guesthouse—is filled with the sounds of Americans cutting deals.

Five years ago, it was often hard to book a call to Moscow. Now there are cell phones in backpacks, on bicycles, and in cars. FedEx delivers. Georgian cuisine remains popular, but there are also French, Chinese, and Central Asian restaurants in the capital. When I was

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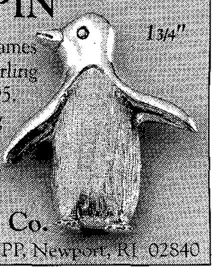

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in town, performances of ballet, opera, and several plays sold out each night, including Robert Sturua's production of "Hamlet," in the Rustaveli Theatre. A puppet-theatre group that Gabriadze directs staged a lyrical version of "The Battle of Stalingrad" in a tiny theatre that he and his troupe built themselves. Earlier this month, the group brought the show—a metaphor for the death of the Soviet Union—to the Kennedy Center in Washington.

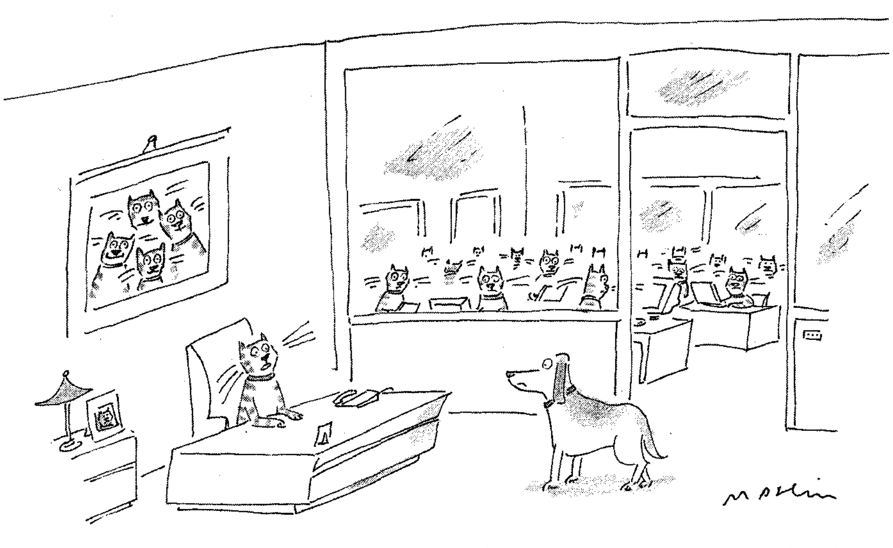
Just as Georgia's wars of separatism and identity were ending, in 1994, Chechnya—which shares Georgia's only border with Russia and has unhappily been a part of its empire for three hundred years—asserted its independence. Chechen rebels fought the Russian Army for two years before driving forty thousand weary soldiers from their territory, and the war often threatened to spill over the mountains and into Georgia. The conflict was a reminder of how fragile peace was in the Caucasus, and of the extent to which Russia still seeks to control the region. Moscow has helped start two of Georgia's civil wars in the past ten years, and the Russian military maintains four bases on Georgian territory.

Georgia managed to remain aloof during the previous Chechen conflict, but it has been harder this time. Last year, when the war started again, the Russians tried to station troops in the Pankisi Gorge, a narrow valley that leads to the mountain pass where Georgia ends and Chechnya begins. The Russians were quickly rebuffed by Shevardnadze, who understands that neutrality is his only hope of staving off a full-blown war throughout the Caucasus. But the Russian generals have kept up the pressure, and at least twice in the past year bombs have fallen on Georgian villages.

"It is literally the case that no high-level meeting takes place between American and Russian officials without the word 'Georgia' being mentioned," Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State, told me recently. "When we talk to Russia, we talk about red lines. Those are lines it must not cross. Well, the brightest of the red lines that exist is the border between Chechnya and Georgia."

The gorge has long been a transit point for drugs and arms on their way from Afghanistan to Chechnya and beyond. Many of the people who live there immigrated from Chechnya decades ago and, egged on by local warlords, they resent the humanitarian aid that is available for the new Chechen refugees.

I drove up from Tbilisi one morning, arriving after a shoot-out in which eight gang members had died. People were on edge. Although the refugee camps are supposed to admit only women, children, and old men, the first thing that caught my eye along the dusty trails—just thirty miles from the battlefields—was two groups of young men cruising around in Mercedes S600s, with smoked mirrors and Chechen flags pasted on the back. The scene in the gorge was much like what you saw in Grozny, in 1994, on the eve of the first war: markets full of bright-red plastic buckets, wheels of cheese the size of tires, rusted tools, ancient spare parts—all spread out on tables as if they were Swiss watches. There were pictures of the late Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev and enough wolf insignias—the sign of the Chechen fighter—to outfit an army. The gorge was like Grozny in another way, too: you could sense the violence.



"Let's face it: you and this organization have never been a good fit."

I had last been in those mountains in 1996, right after the Russians had been chased out. I had driven from Grozny through the peaks to Itum-Kale, fifteen miles from the Georgian border. There I watched Chechen elders prostrate themselves toward Mecca, thanking God for helping to destroy their enemy. It was a late-fall day, and after the prayers several sheep were boiled in huge cauldrons on the open fields.

By the fall of 1999, the Russian generals had adopted the tactics of General Baratinsky, who in defeating the Chechen leader Imam Shamil, in 1859, instructed his soldiers to level every hamlet, village, and lean-to they could find. Russian paratroopers have now dug in throughout the mountains. On the Georgian side of the border, particularly at night, one can listen as SU 25s attempt to incinerate the last few thousand rebels.

Now, as the gorge fills with the detritus of war, the pressure on Georgia has grown intense. Moscow's military leaders have accused Tbilisi of, among other things, providing training camps for rebels, hiding members of Osama bin Laden's terrorist group, transporting Taliban fighters to help the Chechens, and supplying the Chechens with guns. The charges have been refuted by every official observer who has visited, yet Moscow persists.

"When they accuse us of using helicopters to ferry rebels to the Chechen battle zone," Shevardnadze told me, "the Russians apparently believe I am too proud to admit that I am the leader of a country that does not have a single helicopter that works well enough to do any such thing."

Last April, Shevardnadze was elected to a second term with more than eighty per cent of the vote. There was no real opposition, and surely he would have won a fair and open election. But the contest was neither fair nor open. Western and local observers complained loudly about tampering; and they found that many polling places in contested regions were closed illegally and that at least some votes were faked by supporters of the President.

A story soon circulated that says much about the disheartening journey of the leader who once ripped watches from the arms of his Communist colleagues. The day after the election, Shevardnadze was approached by Peter Mamradze, who is the closest thing he has to a chief of staff.

"There is good news and there is bad news," Mamradze told him. "The good news is that you won in a landslide."

"And the bad news?" Shevardnadze asked.

"Nobody voted for you," Mamradze replied. (I assumed that the story was apocryphal, but I asked the extremely good-natured Mamradze about it anyway. He laughed and said, "Come on, you know he got *some* votes.")

It is perhaps unfair to ask any single person to carry the weight of a nation, but for more than a decade Shevardnadze has been widely seen as the solution to all of Georgia's problems. Increasingly, however, and perhaps inevitably, many people also regard him as a principal cause. To achieve peace, he traded the idealism of his Gorbachev years for the pragmatism needed to bargain with warlords. If the warlords no longer run the country, a small group of wealthy and dishonest plutocrats do. Pensions average seven dollars a month and are infrequently paid. There is no real public sector. The government has made it easy for a few well-connected businessmen to snap up valuable state properties for almost nothing. Shevardnadze's son-in-law received a license to run one of Georgia's mobile-phone companies for fifteen dollars—far less than it would have cost him to buy a telephone. "Under Georgian law, you cannot say that the sale of a mobile-phone license for fifteen dollars is technically illegal," Christopher Lane, the International Monetary Fund representative in Tbilisi, told me. "It's terribly imprudent, but it's not a crime."

There are as many police officers on the streets of Tbilisi as there are in New York, which has at least eight

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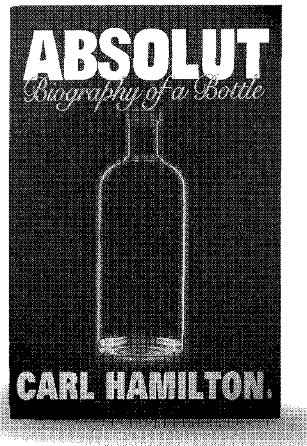

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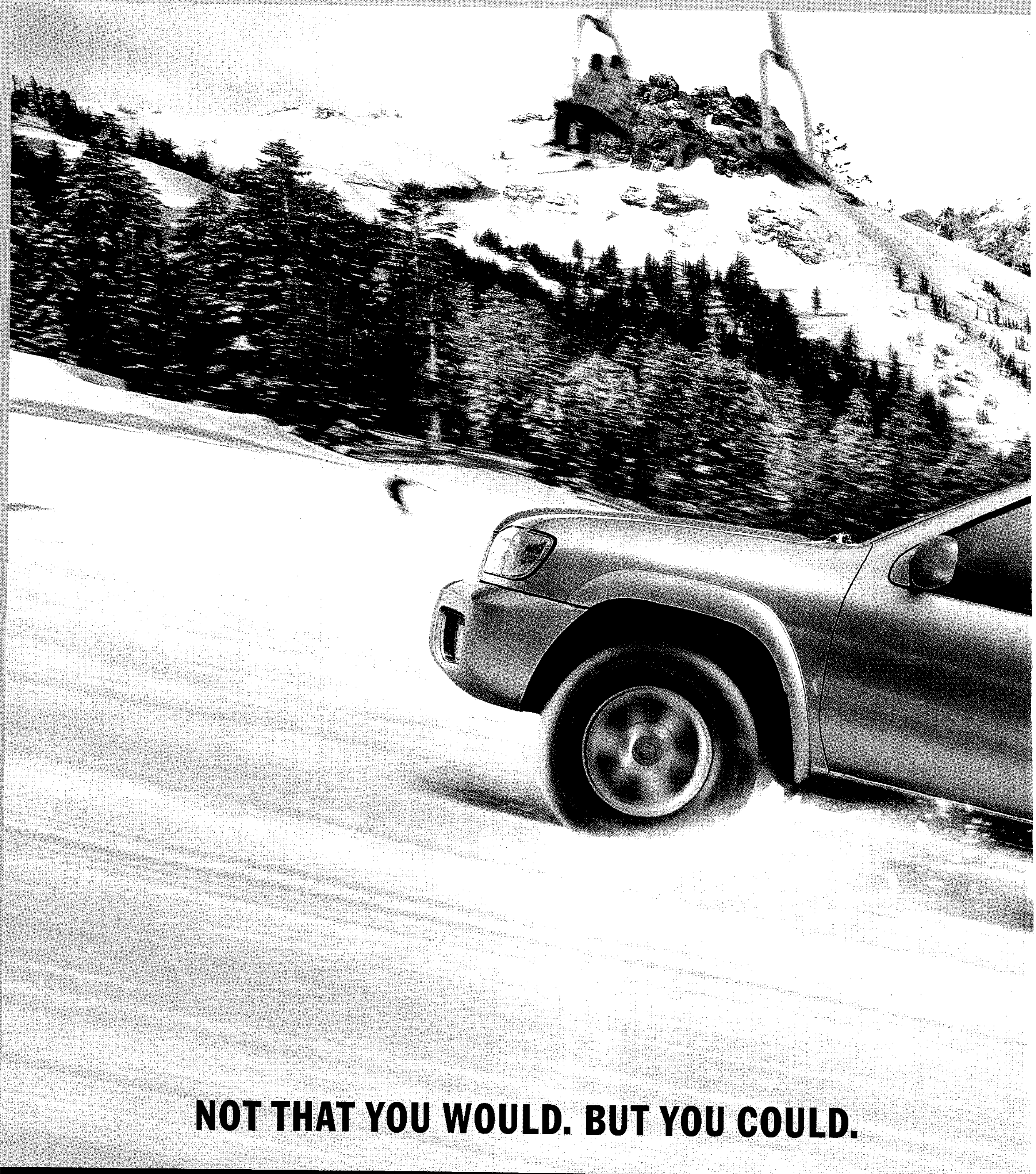

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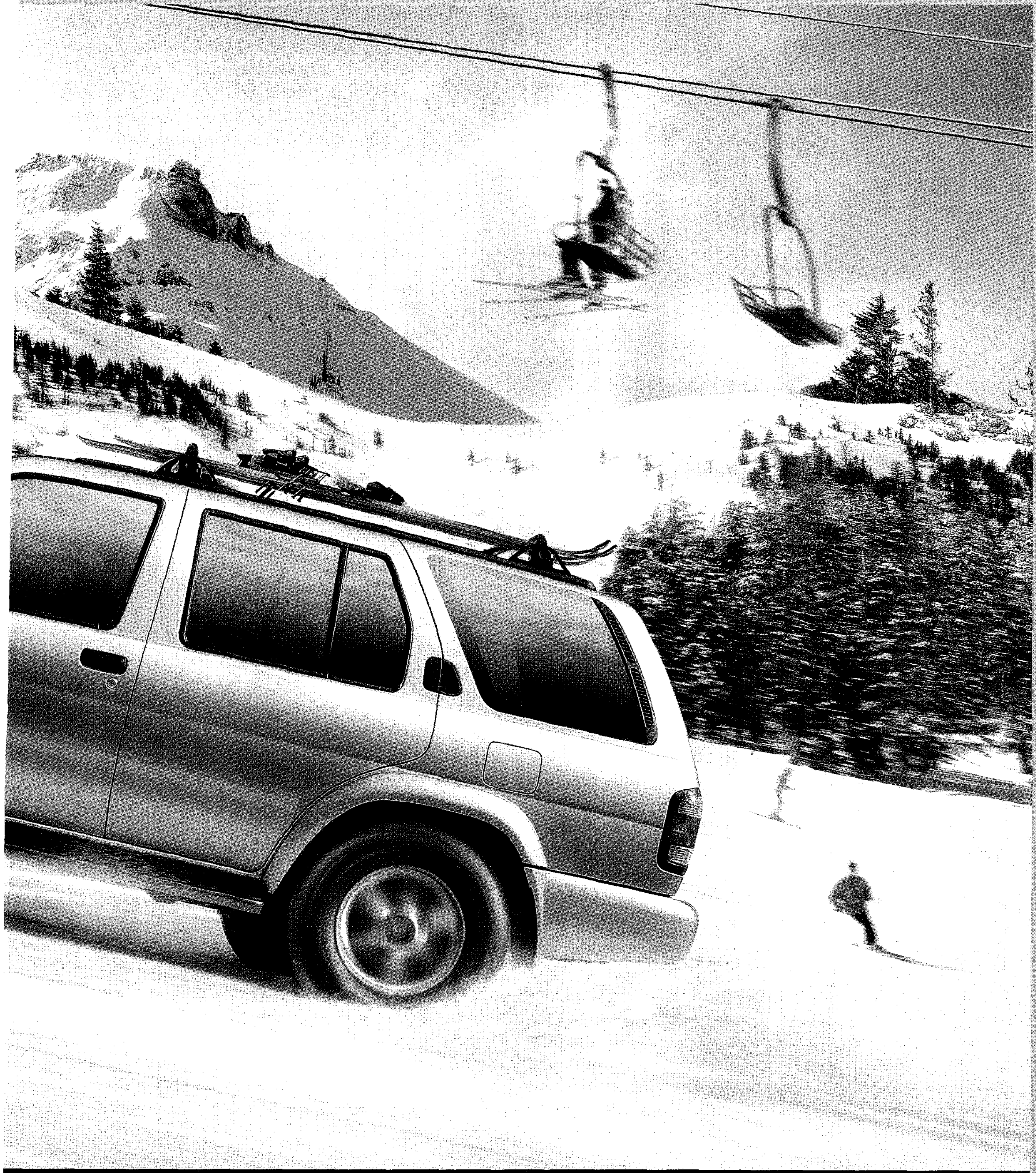

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"Isn't it about time we tell the trophy wife about the trophy concubine?"

times the population of Tbilisi. Policemen are paid almost nothing, so they attempt to scratch out a living by shaking down motorists; they are squeegee men with badges. I was pulled over three times in ten days. "I don't get paid, and I have four children," one officer explained. "Just give me five laris"—about two and a half dollars—"and you can go." To get into university one has to pay a bribe, to get into the best courses you pay again. Then there are fees for the tests (to take them and to pass them) and fees to graduate.

Shevardnadze knows all this. When I sat down with him at a large oval table in the anteroom outside his office, he said gravely, "We are facing a situation of intolerable corruption. It is not connected with or dependent upon one or two ministers or even the whole government of Georgia. . . . The entire system was created full of corruption. They are flourishing, and they are sucking blood from the rest of society. They are killing this nation." He pounded the table hard enough to rattle the tea glasses.

I asked him if he ever looked back with longing at his time away from Tbilisi. "I remember those years with the greatest pride," he said. "But my position today, being President of Georgia, is the highest post I have ever held. And it is the post that I want to define me."

When Gorbachev was in power, he loved to talk during interviews. Shevardnadze is far less voluble, but one walks away feeling that he has shared his deepest thoughts and doubts. He is so skilled at creating this impression that a visitor can be dazzled. Shevardnadze decries the corruption that threatens to ruin Georgia, but in important ways he *is* Georgia. If corruption is rampant, who else could possibly stop it? Apart from complaining, Shevardnadze has in fact done little. Plans are released and ignored. Speeches are delivered and forgotten. No senior officials have gone to jail, and only a few have been fired. Breaking the law is acceptable. When a landlord shows a prospective tenant an apartment in Tbilisi, he will always point out the electrical meter, the phone connection, and the "illegal line," for stealing electricity when there is a blackout, as there has been every day this winter, or when the bill has gone unpaid.

For many years, Shevardnadze managed to avoid the fate of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, who were regarded abroad as visionaries but were detested at home. Shevardnadze used to be met with cries of *"Nas Eduard"*—"Our Eduard"—nearly everywhere he went. No longer. "The man saved Georgia, and I doubt that anyone else could have done it," Ghia Nodia, who runs a think tank called the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, told me. "But it's time already to say the truth. Eduard Shevardnadze has lost touch completely with this country. He is an old power addict, and his reputation is at the lowest it has ever been."

"The truth is that Georgia is as corrupt as any place you will ever see," Gela Charkviani told me when I went to see him one morning at the State Chancellery. Charkviani, no critic of the regime, is one of Shevardnadze's oldest allies and his senior adviser on foreign affairs. He is a former sociology professor, with thick eyebrows and thinning hair; his father, Kandida, was a loyal aide to Lavrenty Beria, Stalin's K.G.B. chief. "Nobody ever had democracy in this part of the world," Charkviani said. "It doesn't come naturally to us."

Not long ago, a young television correspondent named Akaki Gogichaishvili began his broadcast this way: "International experts have concluded that, owing to corruption, the state budget is losing an annual one billion laris from customs. This sum is equal to the official state budget, which means that Georgia has two budgets—the official one, which is applied to five million citizens, and an unofficial budget, which is exploited by fewer than a hundred high-ranking officials."

That report—and others that the thirty-four-year-old correspondent presents each week on his show, which is called "60 Minutes"—has startled the country. Gogichaishvili is Georgia's first true investigative television journalist, and he regularly infuriates Shevardnadze. In fact, last summer he called a news conference to announce that several government officials had told him to run for his life, and in July the chairman of the Helsinki Commission met with Gogichaishvili in Washington and denounced the government's efforts at intimidation.

Akaki—as he is called by everyone—looks a bit like a thin, intellectual Andre Agassi. His head is shaved and his black eyes are the size of walnuts. He studied geology at the university in Tbilisi and then won a scholarship to study journalism and politics at Duke University, before working for a while in Washington. Each week he and his colleagues attack various privileged groups, usually in great detail, and with supporting documents in hand. The show sometimes feels breathless, but it never roams far from the facts.

Recently, Akaki went after one of Shevardnadze's favorite groups, the union of professional writers, which he accused of embezzlement. Within weeks, the security establishment of Georgia—including the Interior Ministry and the office of the general prosecutor—were ordered to investigate Akaki's work and his life.

"My bosses have been amazing," Akaki told me. "I made it clear to everyone on the show that if they leave I will understand. Not one has gone. Old ladies come up on the street and kiss me."

The only time I saw Shevardnadze at a loss for words was when I asked him about "60 Minutes." For a long while, he was silent. "Please believe me," he said finally. "It was I who created the atmosphere for the newly emerged free press. I have fixed meetings every Monday with the press. Does your President do that? Everyone is invited, and anyone can ask any question."

He took a sip of tea and went on, "My popularity is not what I would desire. This hungry population, with arrears in wages, pensions, unemployment—it's terrible. How can I betray these people and go home? For me, of course, the best thing would be to go home, sit silently, write my memoirs, and remember the great events that I have seen in my life." I suggested that might bore him. "Oh no, it would be wonderful. My life is hell. It's a nightmare. Every day I am burned again. When I came to Tbilisi, I had the feeling that I had dropped myself into an inferno. Even now I feel that I am swimming in water that is far too hot. It is hard, it is always hard, and it always will be." ♦

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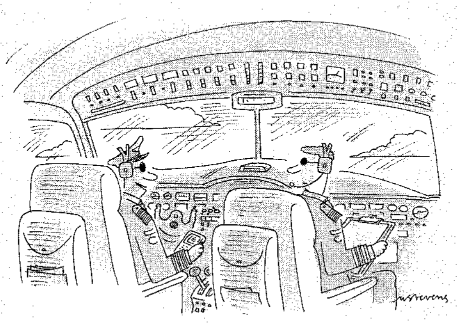
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A REPORTER AT LARGE

A MARINE'S PRIVATE WAR

When his daughter died after being admitted to Walter Reed hospital, a colonel demanded to know why.

BY BARRY WERTH

In 1980, when William Tyra III, of the United States Marine Corps, was a captain stationed at the El Toro base, in Orange County, California, he was assigned to escort the body of a young sergeant to a funeral home in the sergeant's home town, on Cape Cod. The sergeant had been doing routine maintenance inside the wing of an airplane. No cause of death had been determined, and Tyra's superiors were worried how the sergeant's family would react to the news. "I wasn't really prepared for it psychologically," Tyra said recently. "There were lieutenant colonels on this thing, and before I left they told me, 'Either one of two things is going to happen. They're going to embrace you and welcome you. Or they're going to hate you, because you represent what killed their son.' " At the funeral home, Tyra realized that none of the family members had been told how the sergeant had died—he had been using a cleaning solvent in a narrow, unventilated space when he began to suffocate. "His mother asked me, 'Did he have an air hose?' " Tyra said. "I knew he didn't, and that he should have. We'd screwed up. I felt absolutely horrible, but I did exactly as I'd been told to do. I told them what I knew. The family later sued the manufacturer of the solvent, but after that day they did not have a problem with the Marine Corps. I learned an important lesson—just tell what you know."

Eighteen years later, in May, 1998, Tyra, who was now a colonel, drove to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington, D.C., to attend a briefing about another death. Six weeks earlier, his sixteen-year-old daughter, Katie, had died after her heart failed while she was being prepared for minor surgery. Tyra, who was the commander of one of the Marine Corps's élite flying units, had requested the meeting, and for the occasion he wore his Alphas—his green dress uniform. Tyra is just five feet six inches tall, yet he has the air of someone who is used to giving orders to larger men. He has piercing hazel eyes and a fierce brow, and he bears a marked resemblance to the tenacious N.B.A. basketball star John Stockton.

The hospital's commanding officer, Colonel Frederick Erdtmann, opened the meeting by expressing his condolences. He then turned the briefing over to the hospital's chief of surgery, Colonel David Jaques, who told Tyra that the hospital was conducting a thorough quality-assurance review into the circumstances surrounding his daughter's death. Although the Q.A. investigation indicated ways in which the hospital could improve various procedures, Jaques said that it had found no evidence that anyone on the case had acted improperly. "Jaques and Erdtmann stated that everything that could have been done was done, and everyone and everything that needed to be there was there," Tyra recalled.

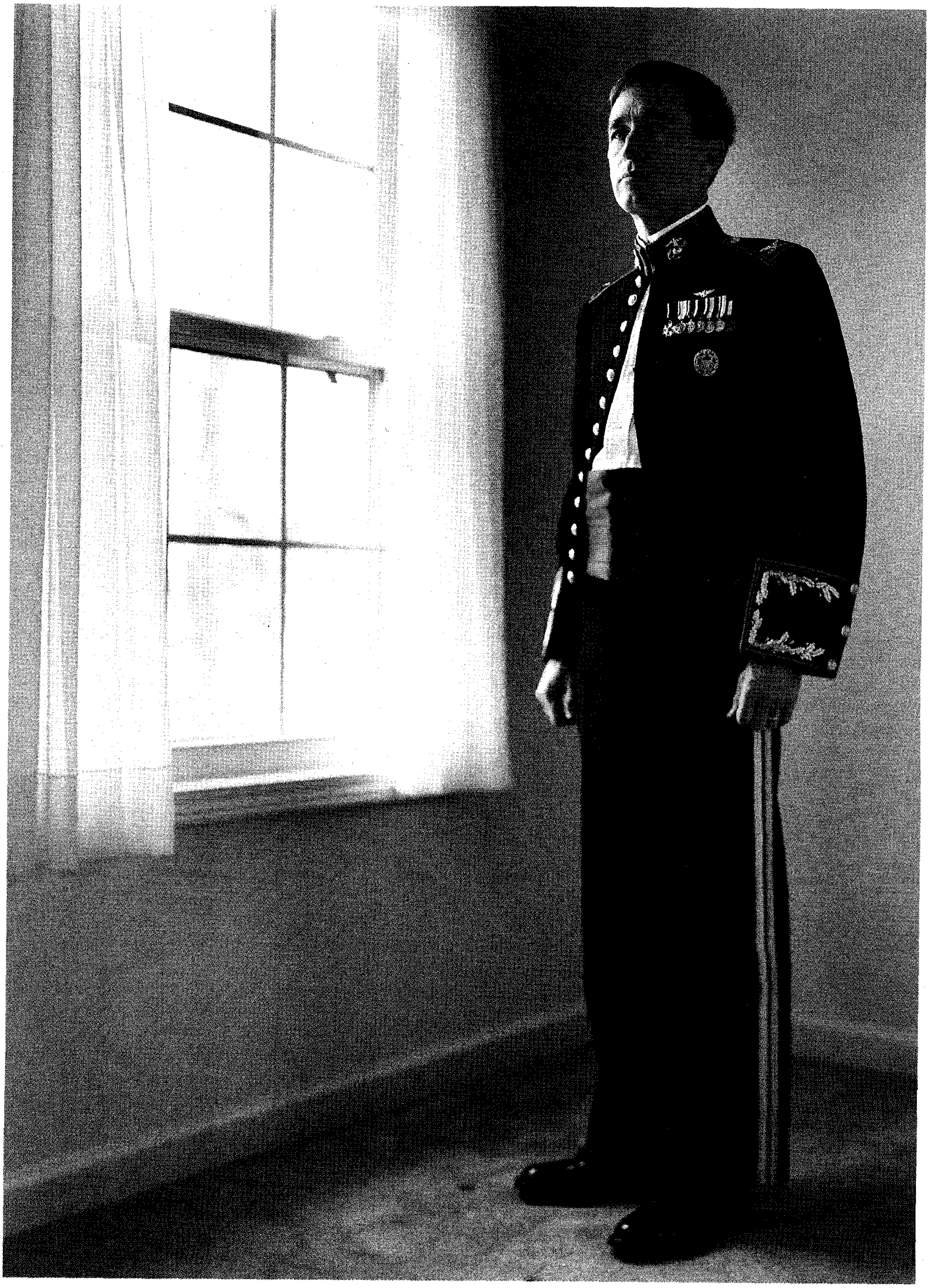
According to Major Byron Edmond, the supervising anesthesiologist on Katie's case, who attended the briefing, Erdtmann believed that an open-door policy was the best way to deal with a family's grief. But, when Tyra asked for a copy of the Q.A. report, Erdtmann told him that such reports were confidential. Tyra persisted, and again the doctors assured him that their oral summary was sufficient. For legal advice during the proceedings, Tyra had brought along his brother-in-law, Norman Roberts, a family-practice lawyer. Roberts whispered to Tyra that they were being stonewalled, and he suggested that they leave. Tyra refused. "I know how the military works," Tyra told me. "If you don't ask the question at the right time, somebody's going to say, 'Why didn't you ask?' "

Tyra told the doctors that he still did not understand why his daughter had died, and that he considered it his duty as a father and as a commander to find out. He then asked Jaques what had caused Katie's collapse. Jaques replied that although they might never know for sure, the probable cause of death was an acute allergic reaction to clindamycin, an antibiotic used for preventing infection during surgery. The doctors suspected that a hypersensitivity to the drug might have caused her heart and lungs to fail soon after it was administered, inducing a violent systemic shutdown known as anaphylactic shock.

Tyra pressed for details. How often did such reactions occur? What was the physical condition of the patients going into surgery? How many of them had died? The doctors said that such a reaction was rare. Finally, Tyra reached into his briefcase, took out his daughter's medical records, and turned to Major Edmond.

According to Tyra's notes of the meeting, he told Edmond, "You said that everyone who needed to be there was there. Well, judging from Katie's medical records she collapsed at twelve hundred hours and you were not paged until twelve-fifteen. Where were you?" Walter Reed is a teaching hospital, and Edmond was overseeing the work of a third-year resident, Captain Michael Hamner. In most teaching hospitals, leaving advanced residents alone while they administer anesthesia is not unusual. Hamner's chart showed that he had tried to revive Katie on his own, before calling for assistance. Edmond had been in his office—"less than a minute away," he later said—and, on being paged, had raced back into the operating room to help. "Still, you were not in the operating room," Tyra said. "So saying that everyone who should have been there was there is not entirely accurate."

When Tyra asked whether there should be a further, more open investi-



Colonel Tyra told the hospital, "Until I have an answer that I have confidence in, we are not done." Photograph by Jessica Wynne.

"We were into things, but now we're into experiences."

• •

gation, Erdtmann replied that it didn't seem necessary, since the apparent cause of Katie's death—anaphylaxis—could not have been anticipated, and since the doctors had done all they could to save her. "I was enormously distressed," Tyra said later. The Walter Reed doctors seemed unwilling to clear up his questions about his daughter's death, and his sense of military etiquette was affronted by their refusal to share information with a senior officer. Tyra recalls that when the meeting broke up he turned to Erdtmann and said, "Until I have an answer that I have confidence in, we are not done."

Recently, I visited Tyra at his home, in Trumbull, Connecticut. A gravel driveway led past a sloping lawn dotted with maple saplings that Tyra had planted himself, and a new rollaway basketball hoop loomed over the garage. Earlier this year, Tyra, who is forty-eight, retired from the military to take a job as a pilot with American Airlines. The house, a newly built Colonial, abuts a wooded ravine, and had a just-moved-in feeling. Tyra's wife, Barbara, grew up nearby, in Norwalk, and Katie was buried in one of that city's Catholic cemeteries. Ashley, Katie's younger sister, is a sophomore at a local high school. Tyra was dressed casually—pressed cotton Dockers, shiny tasselled loafers, and a wrinkle-free forest-green pullover. He told me that when he visits Washington he still gets a seven-dollar haircut at the Pentagon, but he had allowed his Marine-style buzz cut to grow out, and his hair was flecked with white.

During Tyra's nearly three decades in the Marines, he believed that a military career meant that "you're going to work in an environment where standards are high, and people will take care of your family while you're away." Those assumptions, he said, had been battered by what he saw as the Army's refusal to take responsibility for his daughter's death. He told me that for the past two and a half years he had been "consumed" by his quest to get the Army to admit accountability. Then he added, "But I wouldn't have to be doing this if someone had taken responsibility early on."

Toward the end of our talk, Barbara Tyra came into the kitchen carrying grocery bags. She is a compact woman, five feet tall, with dark eyes and a husky voice. She and her husband met when they were undergraduates at the University of Houston; since then, she has worked as a school guidance counsellor. As she started unpacking at the counter, she said that she had just heard the Janet Jackson song "Together Again" on the car radio, and had burst into tears. "You cry, and you wipe your eyes, and you go in to work," she said. "You cry, and you wipe your eyes, and you go into the house. And it never goes away."

Bill Tyra grew up in Texas and Germany as an Army brat. His father was an enlisted sergeant who operated an automobile dealership on the side. In 1971, when Tyra was at the University of Houston, he enlisted in the Army R.O.T.C., but switched to the Marine Corps Officer Commissioning Program the next year. After he graduated, with a degree in political science, he and Barbara got married, and he attended officer-training school, then flight school at Beeville, Texas. After flight school, he was transferred to Little Rock, Arkansas, where he learned to fly C-130s, snub-nosed turboprop transports.

Tyra excelled both as a pilot and as an officer. He impressed those who worked with him as unusually able and mature. "He never got upset, never got ruffled," Colonel William Peoples, one of his former commanders, recalls. "Other guys are good stick-and-rudder men, but they don't have Bill's blend of leadership skills, management skills, and technical know-how. He was down-to-earth, a good listener, both up and down the chain of command—very gentlemanly. He just knew his business."

In 1991, Tyra was sent to Okinawa, where he took command of a C-130 squadron in a flight group headed by Peoples. Katie, who was then nine, and Ashley, who was six, loved Japan. Katie, who was intense like her father and quick-witted and fiery like her mother, did well in school. Tyra's squadron—it was called the Sumos—was selected as the most efficient in the Marine Corps, and, in 1994, he was accepted into the Australian Joint Services Staff College, in Canberra, one of the military's top training schools for senior officers. After eight months, he was billeted to the Pentagon, where he was attached to the Joint Chiefs as a warfare-policy planner, working under the chairman of the Joint Chiefs at the time, General John Shalikashvili. The Tyras moved from Australia into a development in northern Virginia, and though Tyra disliked desk jobs, Barbara and the girls thrived on their proximity to Washington. Several years later, in January, 1997, Tyra was promoted to colonel and assigned to Marine Aircraft Group 41, in Fort Worth, as commanding officer. His Marine Corps friends confidently predicted that he would become the first of them to make "flag rank"—general officer.

Katie, who was then fifteen, had become a top student, and she was worried that switching schools would interfere with her chances of getting into an élite college. She angrily reproved her mother for letting her father's career dictate their lives. She had developed migraines in Japan, and Barbara was concerned about her. Eventually, it was decided that Tyra would go to Fort Worth alone. The family would spend summers in Texas, and he would return whenever possible to Washington.

In late February, 1998, Katie asked her mother to look at an uncomfortable, pea-size lump on her neck. A physician subsequently determined that it was a ranula—a blocked salivary duct—and referred Katie to Walter Reed. After undergoing an M.R.I., she was told that she had a "mass" that needed to be removed in what is often a routine procedure. Her surgeon, Lieutenant Colonel Eric Mair, told her that the cyst looked benign, but that he couldn't be sure. Mair, who was the director of Walter Reed's pediatric ear, nose, and throat group, recommended surgery. Katie, fearing cancer, "was unbelievably nervous at this point," Barbara told me. Tyra, who was in Texas, tried to reassure his daughter in an E-mail: "Walter Reed is the hospital for the President, so you will get the best of treatment." Barbara informed the doctors that Katie was taking Inderal, a beta-blocker that helps prevent migraines, and asked if she should stop. The doctors said that it was fine for her to keep taking the drug.

Walter Reed is regarded as one of the top medical facilities for active-duty troops, their families, and retirees. Since 1909, when the hospital was founded, it has treated hundreds of thousands of soldiers and pioneered major advances in vaccine research and battlefield medicine. Over the years, it has grown into a sprawling medical complex that occupies an area larger than Vatican City. Major General Harold Timboe, the commanding general of the hospital and of forty-two other military treatment centers in the Northeast, calls the institution "at least comparable to our civilian counterparts." Military medicine as a whole, however, lacks some safeguards that civilians take for granted. Military doctors can practice in any state where they are assigned, without being held to the state licensing requirements that apply to civilian doctors. And disciplinary problems and incidents of malpractice in military hospitals are less likely to be reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank, which keeps track of doctors whose work has been called into question.

On the morning of Katie's surgery, April 8, 1998, Captain Michael Hamner was less than three months away from finishing his residency at Walter Reed. Hamner, who was thirty-three at the time, was "a very careful resident, more careful than most," Major Mark Kline, the chief of the anesthesiology residency program, later observed. According to Kline, Hamner was also "very sensitive to criticism." Before getting his medical degree, from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, in 1994, he had been a pharmacist; he'd joined the military as an alternative to taking out loans for medical school. Hamner had recently married, and he and his wife were waiting until after his residency to have children. He told me that he chose to specialize in anesthesiology because it offered a way to "help ease physical pain," and because it was a field in which he excelled. He scored in the upper tenth on the American Board of Anesthesiology certifying exam, and he described his residency at Walter Reed as "one of great intensity. Workweeks were eighty hours of fast-paced learning, excitement, stress, and exhaustion." Hamner has a brush cut, broad shoulders, and a weight lifter's build. As he wheeled Katie in for surgery, at about 11:35 A.M., he suggested that she give her mother another hug and kiss. "He told her I would be waiting for her," Barbara Tyra recalled.

In the operating room, Hamner and Edmond, the supervising anesthesiologist, prepared Katie for surgery. After determining that her vital signs were stable, Edmond left the room. Hamner began administering the anesthesia. At about eleven-forty-five, the surgeon, Lieutenant Colonel Mair, came in and probed the cyst with his index finger, to see whether he would have to cut into the floor of her mouth—a lush environment for germs. Mair decided that he would probably have to make incisions in both her mouth and her neck. He ordered Hamner to administer the antibiotic clindamycin, to protect her from infection, and then left.

Shortly after noon, once Hamner had anesthetized Katie and given her the clindamycin, her blood pressure fell precipitately and her heart rate soared. In an effort to increase the blood pressure, he

"You're a partner now, Cosgrove. Partners don't do self-deprecation."

gave her ephedrine, a drug that dilates the muscles around the bronchial tubes. As the situation worsened, he injected her with esmolol—like Inderal, a beta-blocker—to try to force down her heart rate. He put Katie in the Trendelenburg position—head down, forcing blood to the brain. Around twelve-fifteen, a nurse paged Major Edmond.

In a healthy heart, the right side receives deoxygenated blood from the veins and pumps it to the lungs, as the left side receives oxygenated blood from the lungs and pumps it to the tissues via the arteries. Katie's heart was racing, at up to a hundred and seventy beats per minute, but her left ventricle had all but ceased functioning, causing her lungs to fill with fluid—acute pulmonary edema. For at least nine minutes, she had no obtainable blood pressure—a condition that can induce severe brain damage. Edmond took charge of the emergency resuscitation. For the next several hours, he directed a team of twenty-nine doctors and nurses as they struggled to keep Katie alive. The doctors inserted an inflatable balloon into her aorta to support her heart's pumping ability, and placed a tube down her throat to suction the blood and mucus that were rapidly filling her lungs. They injected her with more than a dozen drugs and tested her blood and urine for toxins to determine what might have caused her collapse.

At 1:20 P.M., Edmond and Mair spoke to the Tyras. Edmond told them that Katie appeared to have had an adverse reaction to a drug and that she was in grave condition. He asked whether she had ever had heart problems. Her left ventricle had failed. Edmond says that he attempted to talk with Tyra "officer to officer." A top graduate of Morehouse College, in Atlanta, Edmond had trained at Harvard Medical School, and he took the lead in marshalling specialists in the hospital to determine a course of treatment for Katie. After several more quick meetings, the Tyras were informed that Katie was being readied for airlift to a civilian hospital, Inova Fairfax, in northern Virginia, because Walter Reed was not equipped to perform heart transplants.

As a pilot, Tyra was trained in compartmentalization, and this skill enables him to block out everything extraneous in an emergency. He and Barbara arrived at Inova Fairfax before the helicopter, and, as they waited by the elevator that would bring her down from the helipad, Tyra wondered, he says, whether his daughter was still alive. When he saw that there was no sheet covering her face, he felt a burst of hope.

At Inova Fairfax, the cardiologist who examined her, Dr. Paul Massimiano, told Tyra that he had "a very sick child," and Massimiano and another surgeon opened her chest and installed an L.V.A.D. (left-ventricular-assist device). By then, her lungs and other organs were so swollen with blood that the surgeons couldn't sew her up. They covered her chest with a synthetic membrane, and for the next twelve days she survived—unconscious, bloated, maintained by machines, and surrounded around the clock by family and friends.

Katie died on the morning of April 21st. The Tyras saw her at the hospital for the last time—Barbara refused to allow an open casket—and then returned home. While Barbara received mourners, Bill Tyra went out to a running track, sat down, and wept. Upon Katie's arrival at Inova Fairfax, Massimiano had told him that although the doctors at Walter Reed had said that she was in "absolutely critical" condition, he couldn't have anticipated how ill she actually was. Shortly after her death, Massimiano told Tyra, "It's entirely possible that someone made a mistake. But, in general, with medical doctors it is very hard to prove, because they don't often know if they made a mistake."

In May, a few days after Tyra was told that there was no need for a further investigation into Katie's death, he flew back to Fort Worth, to resume his command of five squadrons—five hundred active-duty personnel and eight hundred reservists. His adjutant, Captain Gregg Yetter, recalls that Tyra was "preoccupied with grief" but that, as always, he set a high standard of accountability for himself and his troops. Tyra, who customarily drank between fifteen and twenty cups of coffee a day, switched to decaf. He ran up to six miles in the afternoons in ninety-degree heat, clocking six-to-seven-minute miles. After work, he drove to a Barnes & Noble superstore, where he pored over medical books in an effort to understand Katie's hospital records.

The more Tyra studied the records—the surgical chart, a nurse's notes on the resuscitation, and summaries by Hamner, Edmond, and other doctors and nurses who had treated his daughter—the more he felt that a series of mistakes had brought about Katie's death. Over the next several months, he made weekly calls to Erdtmann asking for updates. The doctor assured him that the hospital was still reviewing the circumstances of Katie's death, but, according to Tyra,

"They make me look hippy, right?"

young doctor in training continued to administer a drug that appeared to have caused it. And yet the hospital's review had found nobody at fault.

Tyra turned to his superiors in the Marine Corps for help. In late October, Tyra's boss, Major General Kevin Kuklok, flew to Fort Worth. When he asked Tyra how he was handling his daughter's death, Tyra said that Walter Reed was refusing to let him meet with the major and the captain who had treated her. Through the Marine Corps's chain of command, the matter reached Rear Admiral James Johnson, the Corps's medical officer. Thanks to Johnson's intervention, Tyra told me, the hospital finally agreed to another briefing. Major Mark Kline asked Hamner to attend. Hamner, having graduated from the residency program, was stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, working as an anesthesiologist at the base hospital. He told Kline that his original version of events in the operating room was wrong. He now said that he hadn't administered six hundred milligrams of clindamycin over a fifteen-minute period—approximately the suggested rate of dosage stipulated on the manufacturer's label. Instead, despite warnings that an accelerated infusion of the drug could cause cardiac arrest, he had "pushed" the drug, injecting nine hundred milligrams over a one-to-two-minute period.

Since the first briefing, in May, the Tyras had dealt with their grief in different ways. Bill Tyra immersed himself in his medical research. Barbara, however, felt guilty that she hadn't known about her daughter's allergies to certain drugs or possible heart problems. She had declined to attend the first briefing because she did not want to face the doctors and hear a report that suggested that Katie's death was not, as she tried to tell herself, an "act of God." She said to her husband, "If Ashley ever dies, dig two holes. I don't want to live." She reluctantly agreed to go with Tyra to the second briefing, which Erdtmann had scheduled for the Monday before Thanksgiving weekend. When Tyra called Erdtmann to tell him that Barbara would attend, too, Erdtmann, in an apparent effort to protect her feelings, advised against it. As Tyra paraphrases

NATIVITY POEM

Imagine striking a match that night in the cave:
Imagine crockery, try to make use of its glaze
To feel cold cracks in the floor, the blankness of hunger.
Imagine the desert—but the desert is everywhere.

Imagine striking a match in that midnight cave,
The fire, the farm beasts in outline, the farm tools and stuff;
And imagine, as you towel your face in enveloping folds,
Mary, Joseph, and the Infant in swaddling clothes.

Imagine the kings, the caravans' stilted procession
As they make for the cave, or, rather, three beams closing in
And in on the star; the creaking of loads, the clink of a cowbell;
(No thronging of Heaven as yet, no peal of the bell

That will ring in the end for the Infant once he has earned it).
Imagine the Lord, for the first time, from darkness, and stranded
Immensely in distance, recognizing Himself in the Son
Of Man: His homelessness plain to him now in a homeless one.

—*Joseph Brodsky*

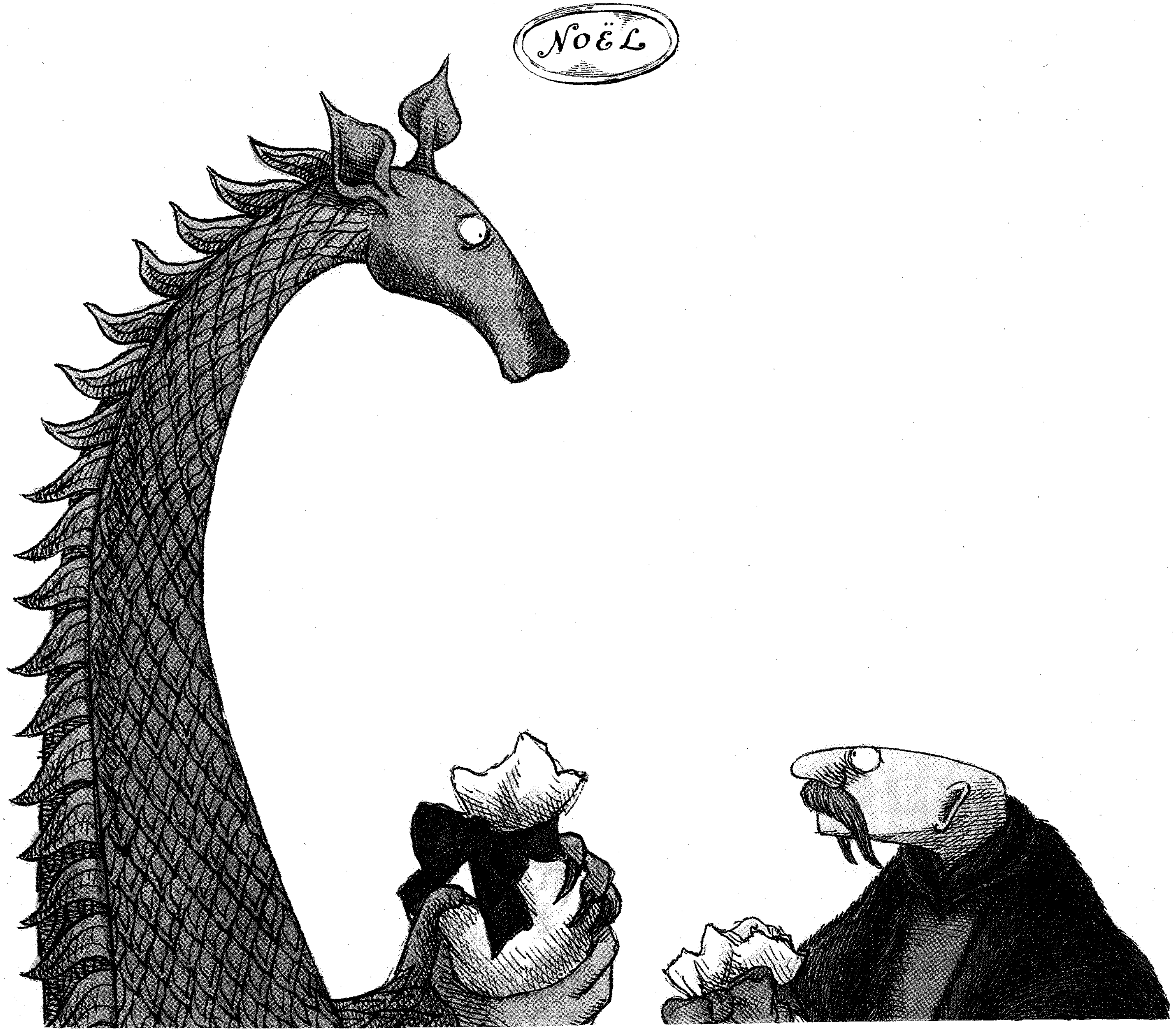
(Translated, from the Russian, by Seamus Heaney.)

he declined to offer specific details about possible new information. Tyra turned his attention to Edmond, who had offered to help. In August, he phoned Edmond with a list of questions. Could any of the drugs given to Katie have interacted with the Inderal she was taking to prevent her migraines? Why was clindamycin being blamed for her death when Tyra's research had shown little documented risk that it could be fatal? In Hamner's written account of the episode—which Edmond signed—the young anesthesiologist said that he had first given Katie a test dose of clindamycin, and then, five minutes later, had slowly infused her with six hundred milligrams of the drug over a period of fifteen minutes. (He gave the drug in undiluted form.) According to Katie's chart, midway through the infusion her blood pressure dropped and her heart rate soared. Why, Tyra wanted to know, had Hamner continued to administer the clindamycin?

Edmond declined to answer these and other questions because, as he later explained, he had received confusing guidelines from the hospital. He told me that he had been ordered to talk to the Tyras but not to discuss in detail what had been learned during the quality-assurance review. Edmond suggested that Tyra press the hospital for a meeting with the doctors who had treated Katie, and told him that he would be willing to "sit down and review the minute-by-minute administration of all the drugs" she had been given.

Over the next two months, Tyra asked Erdtmann for a list of the drugs, including the times and the amounts given, and also for a thirty-minute time line of events, from the moment Hamner started the anesthesia to the time that Edmond returned to the operating room. In early October, Erdtmann sent Tyra a four-page report of the anesthesia. Tyra thought that the memo was insufficient, and he demanded a face-to-face meeting.

Until now, Tyra had regarded his daughter's death as a family tragedy, but the hospital's failure to provide him with satisfactory answers suggested something else to him—a failure of command. Why, he wondered, hadn't Erdtmann, a fellow-colonel and commanding officer, simply ordered Hamner and Edmond to meet with a grieving father to clear up his questions? A patient was thought to have suffered anaphylactic shock while a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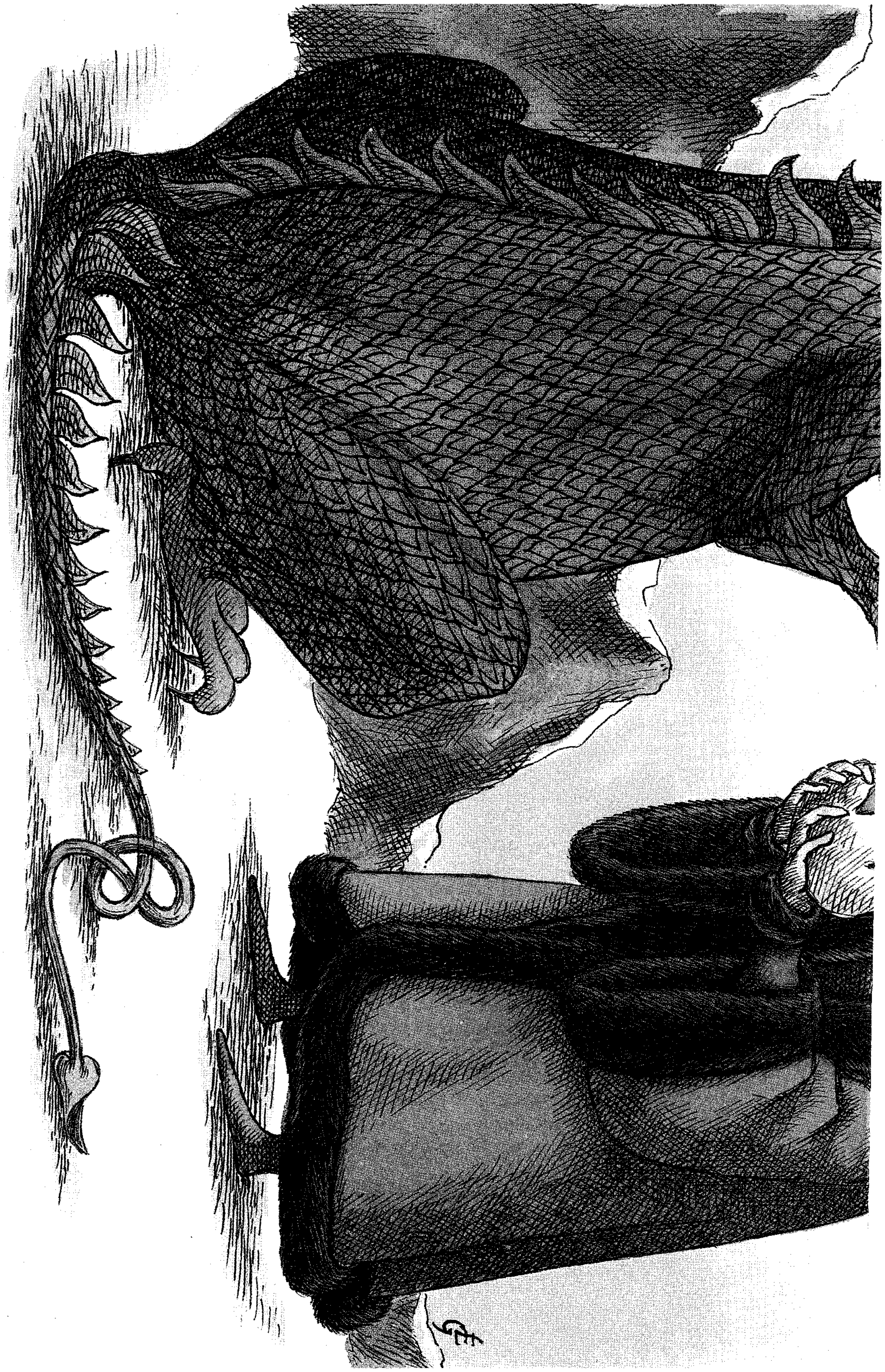
ESTATE OF EDWARD GOREY



the conversation, "Erdtmann said that the resident gave too much, too quick, of a drug."

Tyra recalls, "I just stood straight up. It was part sadness and part redemption. I asked Erdtmann three questions: Was Hamner's statement in the medical record false? Was his statement to the quality-assurance review false? And was this related to her injury?" According to Tyra, Erdtmann said yes to the first two questions. "To the last one he said, 'It appears it was.' The flow that came over me in the next two minutes was the most rage I ever felt in my life." (When Erdtmann was asked about this and other conversations with the Tyras, he declined to comment.)

After Erdtmann hung up, Tyra called in Yetter, his aide. "They killed Katie," Tyra said.

At the second briefing, which was conducted by Major Kline, hospital officials presented another possible scenario to explain Katie's death. (Kline refused to be interviewed.) According to Tyra, Kline said that Katie might have died from a too rapid administration of clindamycin—and not from an allergic reaction. He added that Hamner should have recognized his error right away. Erdtmann gave the Tyras a copy of Hamner's amended surgical notes.

Tyra told me that, at the end of the briefing, he asked to speak privately with Erdtmann. After Barbara and the others were out of the room, he demanded to know the professional status of Hamner and Edmond. Erdtmann replied that both men still had full medical privileges. Tyra exploded. "I said, 'You must be a complete idiot. Do you have any idea of the liability implications? Do you have utter disregard for the soldiers and their families at Fort Riley? Does the Army Surgeon General know?' "

Tyra threatened to go to the Washington *Post* with the story if Hamner's and Edmond's medical privileges weren't revoked within three days. The next day, Erdtmann informed him that Hamner was on suspension in Kansas, but that Edmond had said that he'd known nothing about Hamner's actions until his confession, and that the senior anesthesiologist was being kept on. In December, Tyra received a copy of the letter of confession Hamner had written to his department chief:

> Please forgive me for falsifying medical records and my withholding the truth from you, staff and fellow residents. I am sorry for the lie that I have committed, the inconvenience to others and the loss of trust. My confession of the truth has lifted a burden off my soul. Even though I committed a costly mistake, I feel that I am capable of delivering good medical care to people and desire the chance to continue the practice of anesthesiology.

Hamner's confession eased Barbara's feelings of guilt, but she now had to grapple with the idea that one of the doctors might have been responsible for Katie's death. "My attitude toward Hamner was 'How dare you make me feel like I was the one responsible? How dare you leave us with such unknowns?' " she told me. "I immediately wanted to know who else didn't do their job. Did someone teach him how to give clindamycin?" The Tyras' daughter Ashley, who was devastated by her sister's death, had become angry at her father for his preoccupation with the investigation, and out of concern for her feelings the Tyras agreed not to turn the case into a news story. Nonetheless, they hired a civilian lawyer, Charles Allen, who had served in the Army's legal branch, the Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG), to examine the case for possible legal action. In Tyra's view, Katie died not simply because of an error of judgment but also because a doctor had lied. How, Tyra asked Allen, could Hamner not be held criminally accountable?

Over the next several weeks, Tyra be-

FLIGHT TO EGYPT

Inside the cave (an off-plumb dugout,
But a roof above their heads, for all that),
Inside the cave the three felt close
In the fug of fodder and old clothes.

Straw for bedding. Beyond the door,
Blizzard, sandstorm, howling air.
Mule rubbed ox; they stirred and groaned
Like sand and snowflake scourged in wind.

Mary prays; the fire soughs;
Joseph frowns into the blaze.
Too small to be fit to do a thing
But sleep, the Infant is just sleeping.

Relief for now. They've gained a day:
Herod off his head, his army
Outwitted but still closing in,
And the centuries also, one by one.

That night, as three, they were at peace.
Smoke like a shy retiring guest
Slipped out the door. There was one far-off
Heavy sigh from the mule. Or the ox.

The star looked in across the threshold.
The only one of them who could
Know what its fervent staring meant
Was the Infant. But He was *infans*, silent.

—*Joseph Brodsky*

(Translated, from the Russian, by Seamus Heaney.)

came more aggressive toward Erdtmann, even after Erdtmann told him that he had ordered a new review of medical procedures, led by an outside doctor, Colonel Thomas Pennington, who was a staff anesthesiologist at Brooke Army Medical Center, at Fort Sam Houston, in San Antonio. Tyra also learned that the Army's Criminal Investigation Division had started an inquiry of its own. Tyra was not mollified. On December 17th, he sent Erdtmann a letter accusing him of being dilatory about convening "an appropriate investigation," and again demanded to know why Edmond had not been suspended, pending the investigations' results. Four days later, Erdtmann sent Tyra a letter in which he said that although he had tried to be "upfront, honest and candid," for the sake of the family's "health and well-being," he now believed that "the frequent dialogue and correspondence back and forth has not helped your family, rather, it may be making your situation more difficult." He told Tyra that he could no longer discuss the case with him.

In the meantime, the commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles Krulak, had become involved in the case. At Tyra's urging, Krulak got in touch with the Surgeon General of the Army, and directed Rear Admiral Johnson to update him weekly on the case. On Christmas Eve, Tyra received an E-mail from Krulak:

> We are at "all ahead flank" on the investigation of the tragic death of your precious daughter. . . . The doctor who was responsible for the tragedy has been relieved and is not only undergoing an investigation on his fitness to retain a license but, equally important, a criminal investigation on "false official statements." . . . We are in the fight!

Tyra now began bombarding the officer in charge of the C.I.D.'s investigation, Special Agent-in-Charge David Enos, with medical facts, documents, and questions. Under military law, such behavior is considered appropriate, since Tyra was the deceased's father. But military law also holds sacrosanct a specific command's discretion in levelling charges after an impartial investigation, and it punishes what is called "unlawful command influence"—perceived abuses of jurisdictional authority. Tyra knew that if commanding officers in the Marine Corps were seen as coercing a compliant Army legal system the investigation could be discredited. Moreover, this was a case with few precedents. In military hospitals, as in civilian ones, homicide charges against doctors accused of killing patients are rare, mainly because doctors nearly always kill by mistake or malpractice, not intention, and the Army hadn't brought a charge of medical homicide in decades.

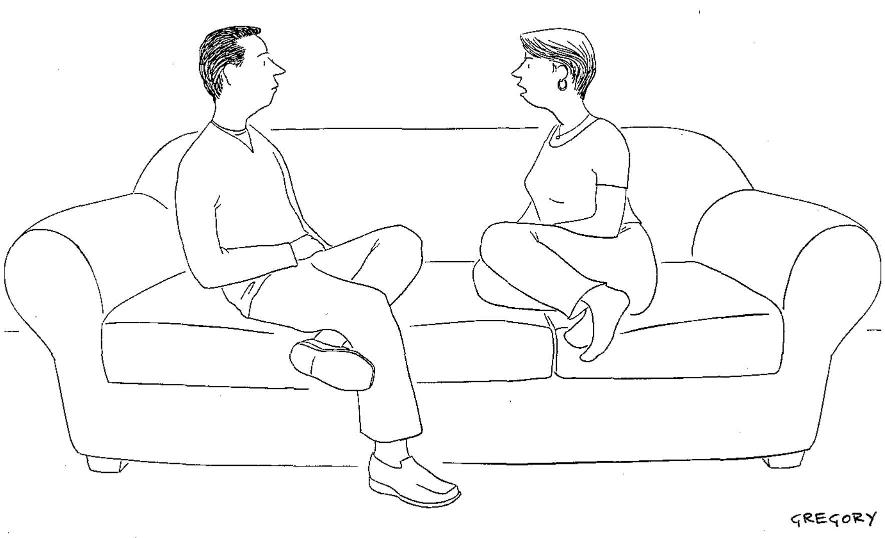
Tyra was aware of the risks of his behavior, but since Department of Defense guidelines explicitly encourage the victims and witnesses of crimes to come forward, he remained persistent about getting a full account of the medical facts and making sure that whoever was in any way responsible for his daughter's death be held accountable. After his rupture with Erdtmann, he approached Erdtmann's superior in the Army Medical Corps, Major General Leslie Burger, who told Tyra that he was closely monitoring both Enos's work and the administrative investigation.

On March 8, 1999, Burger called Tyra and said that, as a result of the nearly completed investigation, Walter Reed had a new theory about the case: Hamner's negligence with clindamycin was not necessarily the cause of Katie's death. The hospital now suspected that the drug Inderal, the beta-blocker she had been taking to prevent migraines, might have interacted with three other drugs that she received during anesthesia—vasoconstrictors that were intended to raise her blood pressure. When she was subsequently given another beta-blocker, esmolol, to lower her heart rate, the combination of drugs proved lethal.

Colonel Pennington, the author of the new report, led the third briefing, on March 15th. Tyra, who was the only non-physician in the room, attacked Pennington from the outset, challenging him when he said that Hamner had responded appropriately by trying to resuscitate Katie before summoning additional help. According to Tyra's notes of the meeting, he said to the doctors, "Hamner did not call for assistance for nine to fifteen minutes after Katie collapsed, depending on which account you read. And, at a minimum, he didn't call for assistance for four to five minutes after she had lost an obtainable blood pressure. Were Captain Hamner's actions appropriate for a resident in a teaching hospital?"

According to Tyra, Pennington (who has declined to comment on the case) explained that physicians needed time to "work the problem." Moreover, he said that other anesthesiologists at Walter Reed had told him that it was not uncommon to push drugs faster than recommended. On the question of whether clindamycin should have been pushed, Pennington's report cited a letter from an Air Force surgeon who said that he had seen the drug administered "via direct IV push" without causing any adverse reaction. However, the letter did not address the danger of Katie's particular dosage and rate of infusion.

Tyra said sharply, "Then pushing



"We really need to talk about our relationship, so I've booked us on a TV show."

drugs quickly is a common practice at Walter Reed? Administering drugs not in accordance with a manufacturer's instructions is the standard of care at Walter Reed? Is that correct?" According to one of the participants, the doctors answered that accelerating the rate of infusion was not the hospital's standard practice, but that it rarely resulted in complications.

The discussion next turned to Pennington's theory that the most plausible cause of Katie's death was her reaction not to the clindamycin but to the combination of vasoconstrictors and beta-blockers. Tyra questioned the doctor about Hamner's administration of esmolol: "Colonel Pennington, giving a beta-blocker to a . . . patient with no obtainable blood pressure, is that a proper procedure, is that within the standard of care?"

Pennington replied that since esmolol is often given to relieve high heart rates he could understand why Hamner had decided to give it to Katie in the rush to get her pulse stabilized. Other doctors at the table corroborated this idea, saying that although the injection of esmolol was risky, considering Katie's blood pressure, the drug was often the first one to be used in emergency situations to lower a high pulse.

According to Tyra, he then said, "Colonel, one more time: giving esmolol to a patient with no obtainable blood pressure, is that a breach of the standard of care, yes or no?"

Pennington answered that he would not have done it.

Tyra sought a second opinion, and he found one from an unexpected source. Pennington had invited a civilian consultant, Dr. Stephen Guertin, the director of a pediatric intensive-care unit in Lansing, Michigan, to the briefing. In an article published in the journal *Otolaryngology: Head and Neck Surgery*, Guertin had cited cases of fatal inter-drug reaction between vasoconstrictors and beta-blockers.

Tyra asked Guertin whether any of the patients cited in his article had vital signs and symptoms that matched Katie's. Guertin said that they didn't. Tyra then asked whether the case studies included any patients who had suffered an adverse reaction to a drug like clindamycin. Guertin again said no. Finally, Tyra asked, "Dr. Guertin, do any of your case studies accurately describe Katie's case?" Guertin said that they did not. He added that giving Katie esmolol when she had no blood pressure was a "mistake," since it had "closed the door on her and put her in an irrecoverable position."

Tyra's interrogations elicited still another plausible explanation for Katie's death: it wasn't simply a rapid infusion of clindamycin or the inter-reaction of vasoconstrictors and beta-blockers that had killed his daughter; it was the ill-timed administration of the beta-blocker esmolol that had prevented her heart from pumping more blood when her body was in shock. Guertin later said that he remembered learning about Hamner's mishandling of the clindamycin only on the day of the hearing, and to Tyra this suggested that Pennington hadn't given the consultant a proper basis for his written opinion.

Guertin feels that even though the theory offered in Pennington's report did not provide definitive answers, it was an honest attempt to figure out what had happened. "What I saw [in the hearing] was a sincere, open effort around a big table to make sure a guy understood that his daughter's death was taken seriously," he told me. But Tyra believed that the holes he had exposed in Pennington's theory indicated that Walter Reed was still unwilling to take full responsibility for what had happened. At the end of the meeting, Tyra turned to Erdtmann, clasped his right hand, and said, "Someday we are all going to die, and when that happens we will have to answer for what we did and did not do."

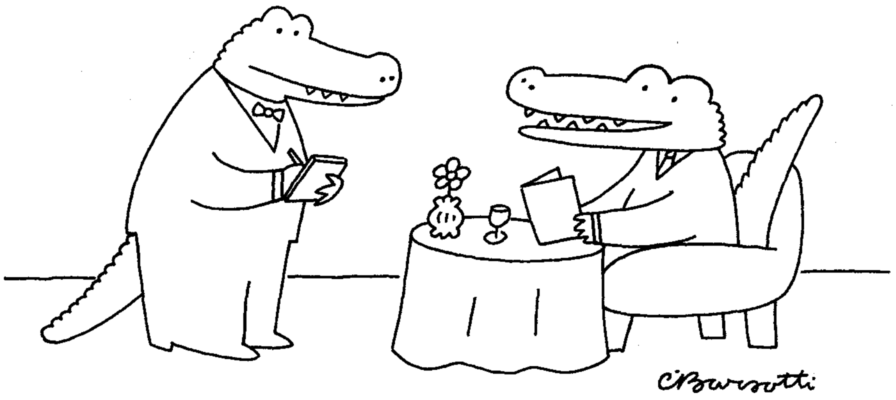
A month later, on April 20th, Barbara Tyra, as the administrator of Katie's estate, initiated a suit against the United States for ten million dollars. The charge was the wrongful death of her daughter. That week, General Krulak E-mailed Bill Tyra, "I am totally prepared to do battle with anyone . . . to include the Secretary of the Army." Shortly thereafter, Major General Burger sent a memo to the commanding general of the Military District of Washington, at Fort McNair, recommending that Cap-

THE HORN OF PAPER
ORDER FORM
QUIZ
80
REMINDER 7th GRADE CHORUS
SOCIAL
WHY IS READING GOOD?
HOTLINE CALL IN
HOMEWORK
PTA
PRU CON?
BRING $5.00
YEARBOOK
SOCIAL STUDIES 91 GOOD!
WHO WAS JACOB RIIS?
ART
TEST
DO NOT THROW AWAY!
AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVI
BRING
BRING POSTER BOARD
WE NEED VOLUNTEERS
CLASS TRIP
31
MATH SEE
AUDIO VISUAL SQUAD
GEOMETRY
BAKE SALE
MATH 14 See me
SILENT SPRING TEST B+
CLASS PICTURE DAY
POP WARNER FOOTBALL
ORCHESTRA AM
POP QUIZ 92
FIELD TRIP TO
MATH 17 See me
CLOTHING DRIVE
WHAT IS ALGEBRA?
SIGN UP FOR
BRING EGG CARTONS
ENGLISH
WHO WAS JOHN MUIR?
WHY I LIKE ROCK MUSIC B
BRING PENCILS #2
HYGIENE
RETURN BY
SCIENCE LAB A-
ATTENTION
SCHOOL PLAY
PTA DUES
JOHN STEINBECK: AMERICAN AUTHOR A- NICE!
YES
NO
SOCIAL!
REMINDER
DO NOT LOSE
IMPORTANT MEETING ABOUT PARKING LOT
7th GRADE CHORUS CONCERT
CLASS PARTY!
WHO WAS SUN YAT-SEN?
OUR ENVIRONMENT
BRING $3.00
SOCIAL STUDIES 79
RETURN THIS FORM BY 5/1
BRING $3.00
BRING $1.00
WHO WERE THE PIONEERS?
WHAT IS BAUXITE?
PTA MEETING IN CAFETERIA
BOOKS
FRANCE: Country of Wonder B+
SOCCER
PERMISSION FORM TO SIGN HERE
PTA GIFT WRAP FUNDRAISER
HOME
PARTY
YOUR CHILD: A TALK FOR PARENTS
ORDER FORM
OPEN HOUSE
SIGN:
ATTENTION!
MATH
FINALS!
VOTE!
R. Chast

tain Hamner "be held culpable for certain actions and the effects of them," including the improper administration of clindamycin, failing to inform the other doctors of what he had done, administering esmolol, and falsifying Katie's medical records. Burger was concerned that questions of unlawful influence might be raised if a court-martial were to be held within his command, and so he recommended that the Military District of Washington bring "appropriate charges" against Hamner.

The previous month, Tyra had reluctantly decided to retire from the Marine Corps. He believed that, as a private citizen, he would be freer to press for a more complete investigation—one that would broaden its focus beyond simply the most junior officer involved in his daughter's death. "The priority was Katie's case," he said. "And it was time to relocate the family."

Earlier this year, in January, Tyra finally gave up his command in Fort Worth. At a special ceremony in July, his flying unit put on a show of air maneuvers—it was billed as a "TYRAde"—and the event was covered by the local TV news station. The Tyras sold their house in Virginia and moved to Connecticut. Tyra began piloting domestic flights for American Airlines out of La Guardia.



"Poodle to be followed by hysterical blue-haired widow? Sounds good."

In the meantime, the Army had ordered an investigation of Hamner, with a view toward a possible court-martial. Tyra was optimistic, knowing that military justice is swift. But three months later, according to Tyra, the first attorney assigned to the case, a captain, went on leave, and only one trial counsel, another captain, remained to carry on with the investigation. In a letter to the commander of the Military District of Washington, Tyra complained that the assignment of only one officer to the case gave him "little confidence" in the Army's "efforts, motivations and performance." There are now three prosecutors on the case.

In Tyra's unforgiving view, the number of culpable participants in his daughter's death was rapidly widening beyond Hamner. He found it odd that Edmond had failed to mention esmolol in his official report. (Edmond says that it was "an oversight.") Then there were Erdtmann and Pennington, who had supervised, respectively, the first and second investigations—both of which Tyra regarded as misleading and incomplete. He began pressing the prosecution to look into the broader question of the hospital's conduct throughout the fifteen months since Katie's death.

For months, the Tyras had been receiving dunning notices from a collection agency for nearly two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in unpaid bills for Katie's care at Inova Fairfax. When Tyra took the first batch of bills to Burger's office, he said, he was assured that Walter Reed would pay the full amount. Burger retired from the Army in May, 1999, and, when the bills kept arriving in Connecticut, Tyra called Burger's successor, Major General Harold Timboe, to complain. When Timboe's chief of staff picked up the phone, Tyra railed, "It's bad enough you killed my daughter. Now you're not going to pay for it." Timboe subsequently informed Tyra that Walter Reed had covered all of Katie's outstanding medical costs.

Tyra found it exasperating that the case had not yet come to trial. "I knew that the longer it dragged on the harder it would be to prosecute," he said. His brother-in-law, Norman Roberts, urged him to approach members of Congress and the media, to force the Military District of Washington to broaden the investigation. "Norm kept saying, 'We need to poke somebody in the eye,' " he told me.

Last spring, on April 9th, a pre-court-martial hearing into United States v. Hamner took place at Fort Meade, Maryland. Tyra had, as he says, been "running circles" with the Army's lawyers. He had insisted that Hamner be charged with murder, since, by "conscious actions," he had contributed to Katie's death. The prosecuting lawyers wanted a charge of involuntary manslaughter, which implies recklessness but needs no proof that a defendant understood the consequences of his acts. In their view, a doctor couldn't be blamed for a patient's death simply because he had administered too much of a drug too quickly and then lied about it—particularly when other Walter Reed anesthesiologists admitted to having pushed drugs without causing harm. Tyra also remained adamant about the need for a wider investigation. The prosecutors insisted on limiting their case to Hamner; they had concluded that the evidence did not support charges against Edmond. Five days before the hearing, Tyra told them, "I don't care if you put Hamner in the gas chamber. I'm not letting go until we've dealt with the other players involved here."

Hamner sat huddled at the defense table with his lawyers, two JAG attorneys in uniform and an unassuming-looking man named Frank Spinner. In recent years, Spinner, a fifty-year-old former Air Force colonel, has become a renowned defense attorney in military cases. In 1997, he won a discharge "under honorable conditions" for First Lieutenant Kelly Flinn, the B-52 bomber pilot who had been threatened with a court-martial for lying about an affair with a married man. Two years later, he won an acquittal for Captain Richard Ashby, the Marine aviator who, in 1998, flew his EA-6B Prowler into cables

““Hey! Get back here!”

holding a gondola full of skiers, near Cavalese, Italy, killing twenty people. Spinner had only recently taken on Hamner's defense, after Hamner's mother found his name in an Internet search that combined the words "lawyer" and "court-martial."

The Tyras testified midway through the three-day hearing. In Tyra's testimony, he gave a step-by-step account of what had happened from the day of the surgery until the briefing with Pennington and Guertin. Barbara took the stand and spoke for forty minutes, without interruption. In the starkly lit courtroom, she looked drawn, and deep rings were visible under her eyes. She had wept during the previous day's testimony, as a civilian staff anesthesiologist at Walter Reed, Dr. Jeffrey Sagel, said that, in the early efforts to resuscitate Katie, she may have been "medically paralyzed and yet completely aware of what was going on," since the anesthesia had been adjusted to a low level.

Now, as Barbara recalled how Katie appeared while she lay sedated at Inova Fairfax, she said, "My daughter did not look like my daughter. The nurses had to ask me to bring a picture in so they knew who they were fighting for. . . . One day we came in and they said, 'Today when you touch her, her skin might feel like Rice Krispies.' They couldn't close her up. She was peeing through a dialysis system, she's on an oxygen machine, and she's springing leaks. My rule was 'Nobody cries next to her bed. You talk to her. You read to her. You tell her she's going to live. As if she was very much with us.' On Easter weekend, they tested her brain waves and lowered her anesthetic and I said, 'Katie, Katie,' and there was a little bit of fluttering in her eyes."

Finally, Barbara came to the last twenty-four hours. She said that Katie "looked tired, she looked bad." That night, Barbara had sat with her and watched Katie's two favorite TV shows, "Caroline in the City" and "Ally McBeal." She and her husband had gone home only once in thirteen days, to shower and to sleep, and that evening a nurse had urged them, "Please go home, you know we'll call you." At six-thirty-five the next morning, the phone rang, and it was a nurse telling them to come to the hospital right away. When the family arrived at the hospital, and heard the news that Katie had died, Barbara shrieked so loudly that later, when Ashley was assigned in a class to write about her most frightening experience, she described her mother's screams. Two days after Katie's death, more than a thousand mourners—many of them Katie's classmates—gathered for a memorial service in a chapel at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Katie's surgeon, Lieutenant Colonel Mair, and her anesthesiologists, Major Edmond and Captain Hamner, were there, and now, in recalling the service, Barbara said, "I looked for Hamner. I motioned him over to me. I said, 'I want to thank you because before she went into the O.R. you told me to give her one more hug and kiss and I did, and it was the last hug and kiss I gave her.' "

The most damaging testimony came from Mair. It was he who had ordered the clindamycin, then left Hamner to administer it while he went to scrub. Mair conceded that giving her the antibiotic was "a last-minute decision," but he was sure that he hadn't pressured Hamner to rush things. Mair's account spoke to the prosecution's theory that Hamner was unusually sensitive to criticism, and that he had "pushed" the clindamycin because he feared that Mair would be angry if he returned to the operating room and found that the patient wasn't ready for surgery.

Mair said that he had been puzzled by the patient's "strange, wild reaction" to the clindamycin. He had ordered a resident to browse the Internet for information about previous reactions to the drug, and the search had turned up a case report, from 1982, about a patient whose heart had collapsed after an injection of too much clindamycin too quickly. A few hours later, while Katie was awaiting the airlift to Inova Fairfax, he had confronted Hamner with the article. Hamner, he said, had read it, then denied that he had pushed the drug. Mair said, "I asked him, 'Is this what happened?' He said, 'No, it wasn't.' I believed him. I had no reason not to believe him."

Hamner was charged with involuntary manslaughter by culpable negligence, as well as with two lesser charges of having made false official statements and having been derelict in his duty. At his trial, which is scheduled to begin on January 15th, the defense, according to Spinner, will admit that Hamner knew all along that he had falsely reported his administration of clindamycin. But Katie's autopsy report listed the cause of her collapse as "unclear," and Spinner has told me that he intends to argue that, since no one knows for sure what killed Katie, it isn't possible to establish Hamner's culpability beyond reasonable doubt. Nor, he maintained, is there any evidence to show that Hamner knowingly put Katie at risk. "Have you heard any testimony about what Hamner knew and when he knew it?" he said to me after the hearing. "No. And you won't.

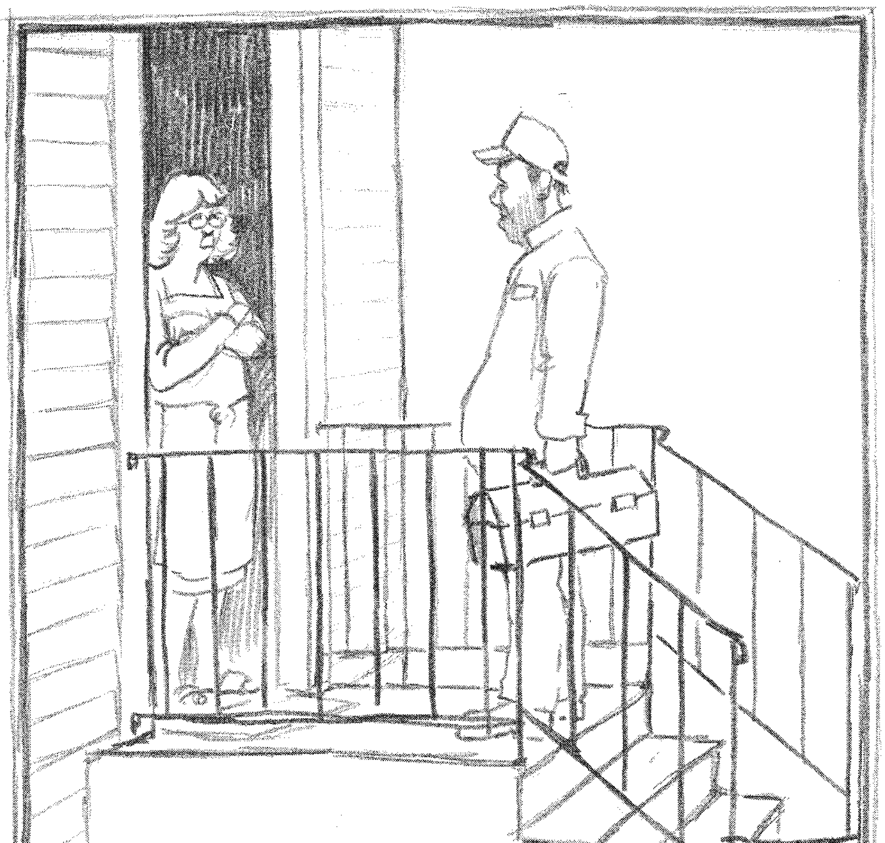
"Why is this case in military court?" Spinner continued. "It seems to have been military policy for decades not to charge doctors criminally in malpractice cases. Why now? Why didn't they just sue?" He didn't hesitate to answer his own question: "Unlawful command influence." Spinner said that he planned to move that the charges against Hamner be dropped because his zealous accusers reached too far. Spinner cited a Washington *Post* article in which General Krulak, the Marine commandant, was quoted as saying, "The hospital was resistant to the Marine Corps. It was not until [we] entered the fray that the tide turned." In a motion to the Military District of Washington, Hamner's lawyers said, "Ms. Tyra's death was unfortunate. Even more unfortunate, however, is that no government official firmly and irrevocably took Colonel Tyra out of the decision-making process."

"Katie was Hamner's final exam," Tyra told me bitterly not long ago, as we sat out on the deck of his house. "And, as far as Walter Reed was concerned, he passed. I believe that Hamner was told that if he confessed, nothing would happen. And, remember, nothing did happen. As for unlawful command influence, well, I agree with Spinner. There was unlawful command influence *not* to do a proper investigation. Walter Reed provided cover for a rogue; Hamner was the beneficiary. In my opinion, if the Tyra family had not got involved with this case and followed through with the help of the Marine Corps, Walter Reed would have taken no action." Tyra seemed relaxed and confident. But the more I spoke with him, the clearer it became that, outside the proudly black-and-white culture of the Marine Corps, he is still struggling to understand a world where questions of right and wrong are more often than not gray.

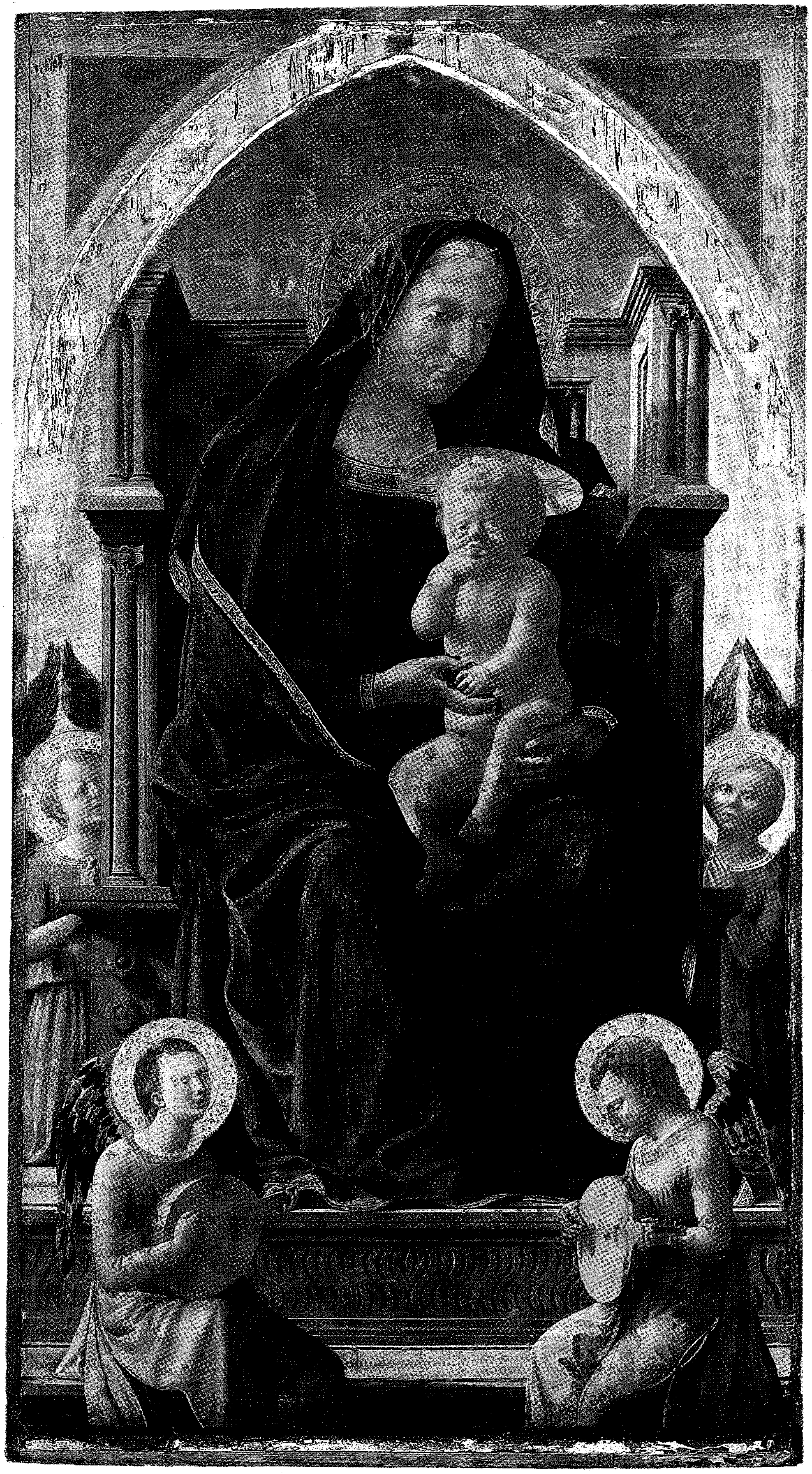
In August, the Army had granted Edmond immunity from any prosecution that might arise from his testimony in the case against Hamner. Tyra feared that culpability in the case would be limited to the most junior officer involved, and he is pressing for a full-scale investigation by the Inspector General in the Department of Defense—an action that could further delay Hamner's trial.

On December 11th, a court session is scheduled at Fort Belvoir that will address the issue of whether superior officers in the Army and the Marines exerted—or appeared to have exerted—unlawful command influence in persuading the Army to prosecute Hamner. Two months ago, Tyra was summoned to Washington to give a deposition on the matter. Outside the hearing room, he came face to face with Hamner, who was sitting on a bench in the corridor. As Tyra walked past, Hamner looked up. "I thought about him with Katie while she was on the operating table, and I wanted to put my fingers around his throat and squeeze," Tyra told me. "But Hamner's not my agenda. If charges against him have to be suspended so that we can get to the bottom of this, I can live with that. What I can't live with is how an institution has failed to properly investigate the death of a child."

Tyra's continuing war with the Army may seem excessive in light of the fact that a suspect in his daughter's death has been identified and that an élite medical institution has been forced to review its behavior beyond the point where it was initially willing to go. In Walter Reed's handling of the Tyra case, the hospital did what most American medical centers do when confronted with the irretrievable collapse of a patient. It assigned a committee of physicians and "risk managers" to search for causes, while trying to protect its reputation. What the hospital failed to reckon with was the will of an aggrieved father and well-trained soldier. ♦



"I'm here to fix the lasagna."



LETTER FROM FLORENCE

THE MADONNA PUZZLE

Discovering a lost painting by Masaccio is an obsessively tantalizing possibility.

BY DOUGLAS PRESTON

The view from the terrace of the old palazzo in Florence where I live is dominated by the great stone bulk of Santa Maria del Carmine, a Carmelite church two blocks away. Most of the existing church was built after 1771, when a fire destroyed the original late-thirteenth-century structure. A workman left a brazier burning in the choir stall, and the ensuing conflagration consumed splendid illuminated windows, carved-wood ceilings, frescoes, paintings, and sculptures. Firemen smashed down the roof of the church on the right side of the altar to keep the fire from spreading into the vestry and a monastery. Their efforts, by chance, saved a small chapel in the right transept, although the frescoes inside suffered damage from smoke and heat. The chapel had been painted by Masaccio in the fourteen-twenties for the Brancacci family.

The Brancacci frescoes established the direction Western painting would take for most of the rest of the millennium. In 1568, Giorgio Vasari, in his "Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects," wrote that "all those artisans who have sought to study the craft of painting have always gone for instruction to this chapel to learn from Masaccio." Vasari names Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Pontormo, Ghirlandaio, Verrocchio, Andrea del Sarto, Perugina, Raphael—most of the important painters of the Renaissance and early Mannerist period. These artists and many others mined Masaccio's ideas about light, air, perspective, color, landscape, the human body, visual narrative, emotion, and psychology.

I grew up among Masaccio worshippers. When my mother was studying art history at Harvard, she befriended a fellow graduate student, Curtis Shell, and his wife, Birgit. Curtis, who was an émigré from Austria, was writing his dissertation on some of Masaccio's lesser contemporaries. In 1954, when Hurricane Carol dropped a tree on the Shells' house, they camped in our living room on Coolidge Hill Road in Cambridge, and a lifelong friendship between our two families began. Later, we all moved to Wellesley, where Curtis became a professor of art history at the college and then chairman of the department.

Curtis Shell was an inexpressibly romantic figure to me when I was a boy. He had a round, unshaven face, long hair that he combed back, a potbelly, and skinny legs, and he shuffled around the house in the middle of the day in slippers, holding a cigarette with an ash that always looked as if it were about to fall off. He spoke German to his children, Italian on the phone, and English to us. The Shells lived in a ramshackle place at the edge of campus, tucked among pines, and my brothers and I went there often to play with the Shell children. The house was full of dark, spooky paintings and treasures that Curtis had picked up in junk shops in Italy.

Curtis took his family to Florence in the summers and during sabbaticals, and they sometimes stayed in the guest house of the Villa I Tatti, which Bernard Berenson had given to Harvard. Berenson was still there during the Shells' first visits, and he and Curtis would talk about Masaccio. Berenson had spent a lot of time driving through the Italian countryside looking for unknown or misattributed paintings in isolated churches and monasteries. He also scavenged England, which was a fertile hunting ground for lost Renaissance art, since many a young duke and earl had come back from his Grand Tour loaded down with Italian pictures. In 1907, in a rectory in Lincolnshire, Berenson discovered a painting of a Madonna and Child that had been the central panel of an altarpiece Masaccio made for a family chapel in the Carmelite church in Pisa. The altarpiece was probably dismantled in the early seventeenth century, during a renovation of the church. (Frescoes by Filippo Lippi and sculptures by Donatello were also removed, and replaced by florid, tumbling putti, writhing women, swollen clouds, and plunging horses. A great deal of the art of the Renaissance was lost in Baroque redecorations.) All the panels of Masaccio's Pisa altarpiece disappeared. Eleven of them resurfaced, but two of the most important ones, the panels flanking the Madonna, have never been found.

For years, Curtis Shell looked for Trecento and early Quattrocento paintings in the mountains above Masaccio's home town, San Giovanni Valdarno, some twenty miles southeast of Florence. He rummaged through tiny churches, searching for paintings that might have influenced Masaccio. While Birgit stood guard at the door, Curtis would climb up on an altar with a flashlight in one hand and a handkerchief dipped in holy water in the other. He tried to clean a few square inches of paintings that were black with the soot of five hundred years, to see what was there. Back in Wellesley, he would tell us stories about his adventures. Masaccio had invented Renaissance painting, he said, and had died when he was only twenty-six, perhaps from being poisoned. Only a half dozen or so of his works survived. When Curtis talked about the breaking up of the Pisa altarpiece, his voice became resonant with offense. Most art historians believed that the missing panels had been destroyed, but he did not. He said he could close his eyes and see them in every detail, down to the brushstrokes. Maybe they were hidden in one of those crumbling chapels high in the mountains. Black paintings, waiting for the light.

The summer I was fourteen, my

THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

Bernard Berenson discovered Masaccio's Madonna and Child Enthroned, which had disappeared in the seventeenth century.

mother took us to Europe, and we went to see the frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel, which Masaccio worked on just after he finished the altarpiece in Pisa. The chapel was dingy, and stifling with the smell of smoke and sweat. (This was several years before it was restored, in the nineteen-eighties.) The frescoes depict incidents in the life of St. Peter, including the famous "Tribute Money" scene, in which Jesus directs St. Peter to get money out of the mouth of a fish to pay a Roman tax officer.

My mother had already dragged us across half of Italy, expatiating on every work of art along the way. Now she launched into Masaccio and the revolution in painting he had begun. High up on the wall of the chapel, to the left of the "Tribute Money" fresco, is a painting of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. If we would please direct our attention there, she said, we would see Adam and Eve depicted as real human beings for the first time, in real space, their bare feet treading the dust. You can feel Adam's sorrow, she said, by looking at his abdomen, which is convulsed with grief. You can almost hear Eve's piercing wail as she realizes that all is lost. No painter, my mother said, had told the story like this before, with such starkness, such physical and psychological reality. And then my mother burst into tears.

Not long ago, I drove up the Arno River valley from Florence to San Giovanni Valdarno, which was a small military outpost when Masaccio, whose given name was Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Mone Cassai, was born there on December 21, 1401. His father, Giovanni, was a notary who came from a middle-class family of box-makers (*cassai*); his mother, Monna Iacopa, was the daughter of an innkeeper. San Giovanni Valdarno sits above the Arno, hard against the gray-green wall of the Pratomagno Mountains. I arrived after a rain, and the cobblestoned streets shone. The door was locked at No. 83 Corso Italia, Masaccio's boyhood home, but the locals roused a young town official, Fausto Forte, who arrived with a big iron key and ushered me inside.

The house has been converted into a small museum that exhibits the work of contemporary artists. I followed Forte through three stories of stark, empty rooms that smelled of whitewash and terra-cotta. There were only two objects in the house: a telephone sitting in the middle of a bare floor, and a work by a Milanese artist, Alberto Garutti, that consisted of two mirrors with black holes drilled in them. The mirrors were placed on opposite walls, and I could see a version of myself with the pox, reflected into infinity.

Masaccio grew up in this house with a younger brother, who was named Giovanni, after their father, but whom everyone called Lo Scheggia (literally, "the Splinter," or, more idiomatically, "Chip"). Lo Scheggia may have worked as one of Masaccio's assistants on the Pisa altarpiece, and he could have been the model for a thin, blond, melancholy boy with crooked eyes who walks next to St. Peter in the Brancacci frescoes, as the saint heals cripples with his shadow. The Church of San Lorenzo, which is down the street from Masaccio's house, contains several paintings made by Lo Scheggia some thirty years after his brother died. They are crude and labored, with overworked finishes.

In 1406, Masaccio's father died. His mother soon married a neighbor. After that, there is a gap in the record. Nothing is known about Masaccio's childhood, early instruction, or influences. Typically, he would have been sent to Florence at the age of eight or ten to work in an artist's *bottega*, or workshop. At thirteen or so, he would have become an apprentice in the shop. The principal activities of an artist in fifteenth-century Italy were the decoration of furniture, shields, drapery, armor, banners, boxes, and coats-of-arms. Major commissions, such as frescoing a chapel, were usually a group effort, with one apprentice painting the sky, another the robes, a third the buildings, and so forth. Most talented young artists painted in the style of their masters for some time. Masaccio's stepsister Caterina married a Florentine painter named Mariotto di Cristofano, and Masaccio may have studied with him. There is some evidence that Lo Scheggia apprenticed with Bicci di Lorenzo, a leading painter of the day. But Masaccio's work looks nothing like that of these painters, or of any other Florentine artist of the period. By the time he was twenty, his work showed scarcely any influences at all. This is the great conundrum of Masaccio. Where did he get his ideas?

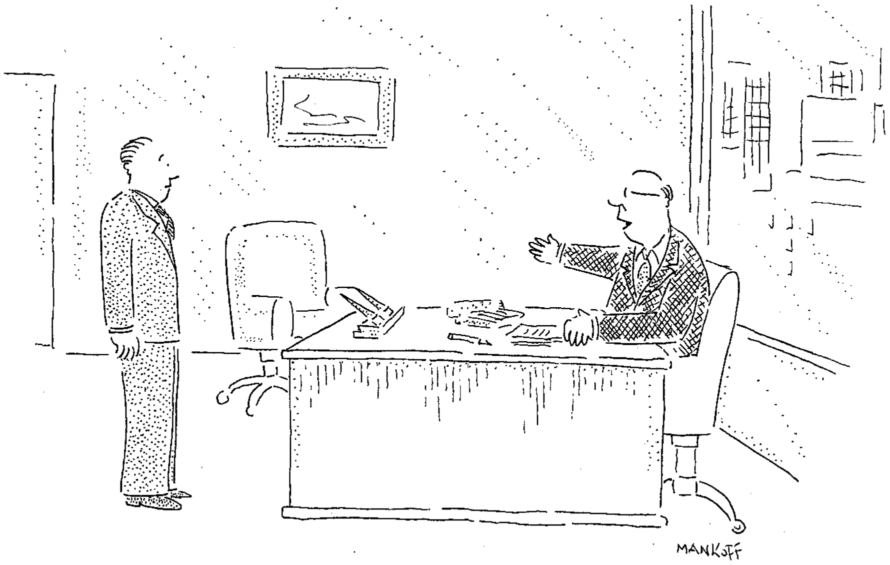
In 1422, Masaccio reappears in the documentary record: he joined the Arte dei Medici e Speziali, the Guild of Doctors and Pharmacists, to which Florentine painters belonged. He lived for a while in the San Niccolò district of Florence, a low-rent warren of dark narrow streets and austere palazzi. Filippo di Brunelleschi's great dome for the Florence Cathedral was being constructed then, and it rose in concentric rings above the city. The Renaissance had already begun in architecture and sculpture—led by Brunelleschi and Donatello—but Florentine painting was stuck in the Middle Ages, in a style art historians call International Gothic, which prized beauty, elegance, decoration, and a certain preciousness.

In 1424, Masaccio joined the Company of St. Luke, a painters' confraternity. In June of the following year, he was paid for gilding candlesticks for the cathedral in Fiesole; a month later, he owed a small debt to a man named Bartolomeo di Lorenzo. In 1426, he was sued by his furrier for a debt. That same year, he went to Pisa and painted the altarpiece for the Scarsi family. Masaccio earned eighty florins for his work, the equivalent of about twelve thousand dollars today, out of which he had to pay his assistants. The final payment from the Scarsis was made in December, 1426. After this, Masaccio probably went back to Florence to work on the frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel, in collaboration with an older painter, Masolino. No documents related to the Brancacci commission have survived.

A year later, Masaccio interrupted his work on the Brancacci Chapel to make a journey to Rome. Perhaps he had landed an important commission, or perhaps he wanted to try his fortune there. Before leaving, he filed a tax return on behalf of himself, his mother, and his brother. He claimed that he was dead broke. The eighty florins from the Pisa commission were gone. If he was paid anything for the Brancacci Chapel, it, too, had been spent. He said he had no assets and no expected income. He had moved out of San Niccolò and lived in a rented house with his mother and brother on the Via dei Servi in Florence; he shared a *bottega* near the Bargello. And he owed forty-four florins to various people.

On the tax return, which is written in

Masaccio's hand, his name has been crossed out. In the margin, someone has written, "*Dicesi è morto a Roma*" ("Said to have died in Rome").



"Sit down, Brad—I've got some character-building news for you."

• •

"He was very absent-minded and unpredictable," Vasari wrote about Masaccio, "like a man who has devoted his whole life and will only to the details of art"—*cose dell'arte*, literally, "things of art"—"caring very little about himself and even less about others. And because he never wanted to think in any way about worldly affairs or concerns, not even about how he dressed himself, he was unaccustomed to collecting anything from his debtors unless he was in dire straits. Instead of Tommaso, which was his real name, everyone called him Masaccio. This was not because he was a bad man, for he embodied goodness itself, but rather because of his complete lack of concern. In spite of this, however, he was so kindly in doing favors or kindnesses for others that no more could be expected."

Some art historians dismiss this description of Masaccio as being formulaic, but everything in the record—Masaccio's debts, his lack of success despite his talent, his originality, his disdain for tradition, his rough painting style, his visceral dislike of "beauty"—corroborates Vasari's account. Even the nickname, as Vasari points out, is revealing. Maso, or Tom, is a diminutive of Tommaso. The *-accio* suffix adds a pejorative sense to a word, although in the Tuscan dialect it can also be affectionately teasing. Art historians have offered up various translations: Big Tom, Ugly Tom, Rough Tom, Clumsy Tom, Sloppy Tom. In any case, it was probably a name given to him by his friends, based on his eccentricities.

In the Brancacci Chapel frescoes, there are four people standing to the right of St. Peter enthroned. Some art historians have speculated that the tallest member of this group, a young man with black hair peering intently out of the painting, is Masaccio. His purposeful gaze would have been directed toward two mirrors, set up at angles to each other, which allowed him to paint himself in a three-quarter view. The three other figures may be based on close friends of Masaccio's: Masolino, the architect Leon Battista Alberti, and Filippo di Brunelleschi. What strikes one about Masaccio's face is how familiar he looks, how modern, a man standing stubbornly outside the fashions and tastes of his time.

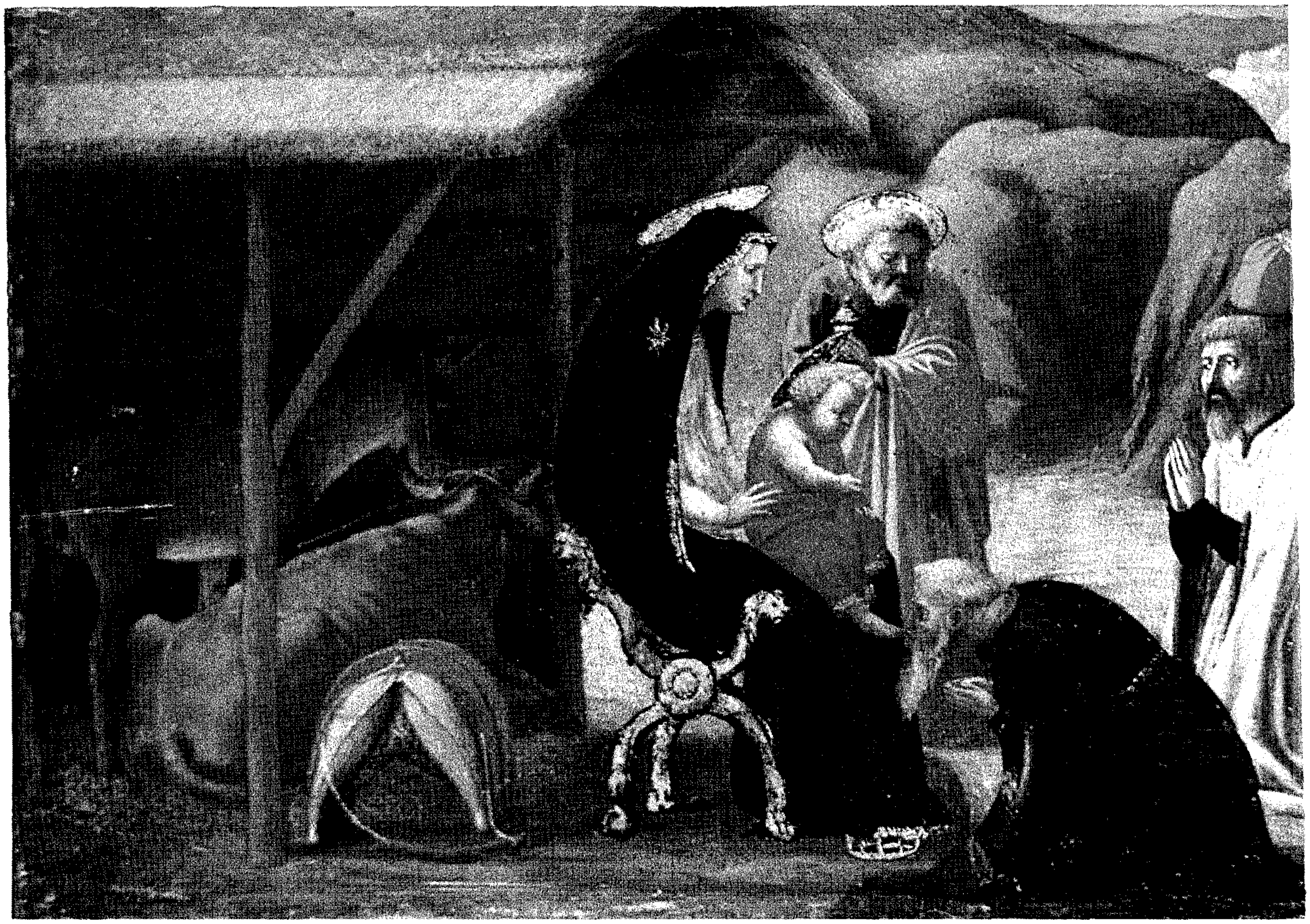
Vasari mentions that Masaccio might have been poisoned. This story has generated various speculations: that the Pope had him murdered because the Brancacci frescoes have an anti-Papal subtext; that Masolino killed him out of jealousy; that he was murdered by an angry creditor. One art historian suggested to me, half facetiously, that Masaccio might have faked his death to escape his creditors. Most likely, Masaccio simply died of plague or fever contracted during the dangerous Roman summer.

The Pisa altarpiece was intact in 1568, when Vasari published the second edition of his "Lives." "In the Carmine Church in Pisa," he wrote, "there is a Virgin with Child, with some little angels at Her feet who are playing instruments, while the one strumming a lute turns his ear attentively to the harmony of his playing. Our Lady is in the middle, along with Saint Peter, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Julian, and Saint Nicholas, all of which are very lively and brightly colored figures"—these four saints appeared on the now lost side panels. "Below in the predella are some small figures in scenes from the lives of these saints, and in the middle the three Magi offer their gifts to Christ; and in this part of the panel there are a number of horses drawn so beautifully that one could not ask for more. . . . Above the panels, as the finishing touches, there are also many saints placed in frames around a crucifix."

If the Scarsi family was still around when the church was remodelled, they probably took the altarpiece back, since it belonged to them. They might have kept a few panels to hang in their house and sold the rest. If the Scarsi line had become extinct, the Carmine Church would also have broken up the altarpiece, and possibly exiled the bigger panels to impoverished churches in the countryside while selling or reusing the rest. (A nice flat seasoned piece of wood had many uses—as a table, for example, or the base for another painting.)

The first panel of the altarpiece to resurface was a picture of St. Paul, which was bequeathed by a local citizen to the city of Pisa in 1796. Between 1880 and 1901, more than half a dozen other panels turned up, in London, Florence, and Naples. All of them had been misattributed or unattributed. By the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the smaller panels had been found, and Berenson's discovery of the central panel made it possible to understand the importance of the whole work.

The Madonna in the Pisa altarpiece is a big, solid, homely woman, draped in heavy woollen clothing. She sits in an



Before Masaccio's Pisa altarpiece was dismantled and the various parts of it were dispersed, a small painting depicting the Adoration

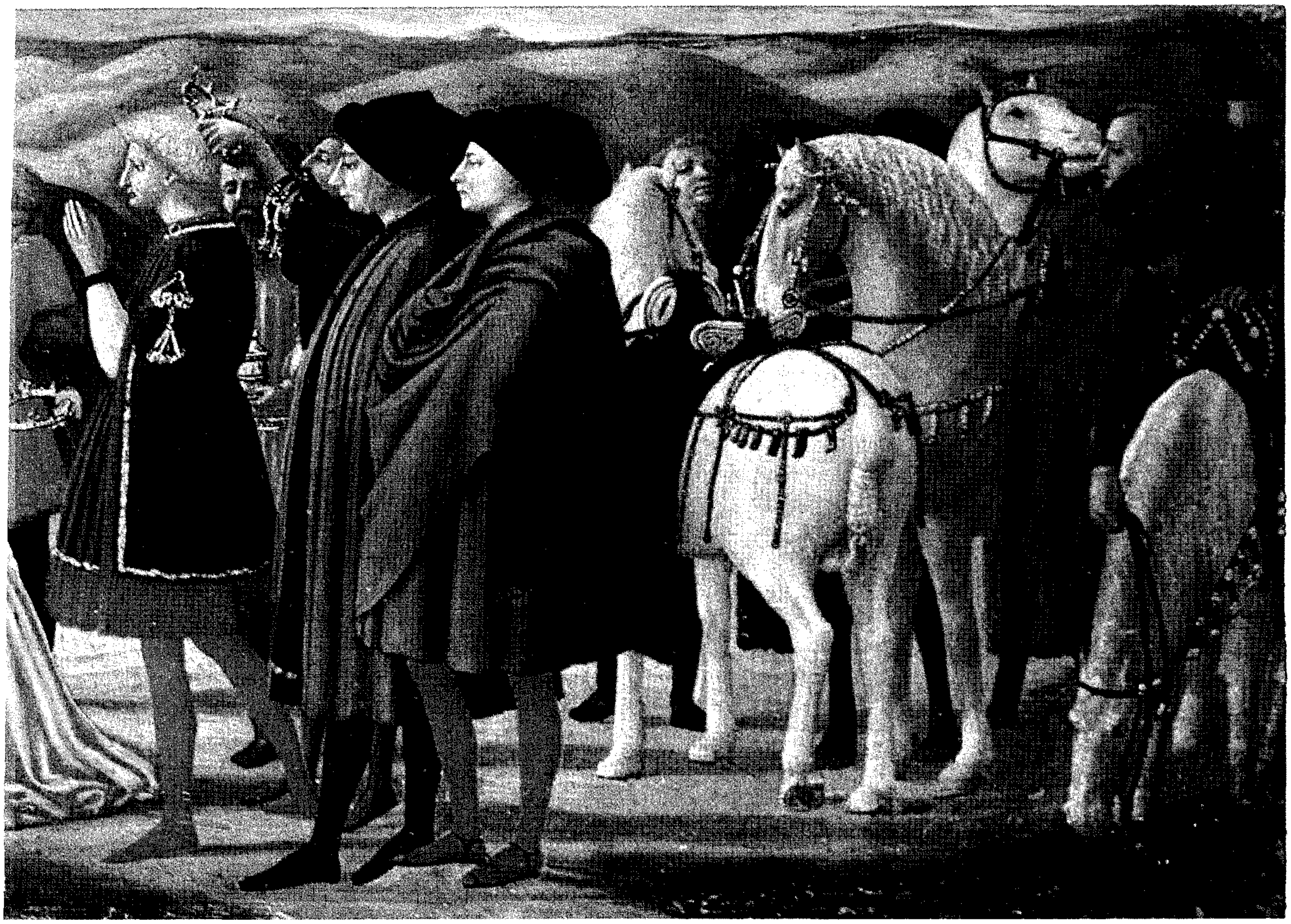
awkward pose, knees apart but feet together, on an undecorated throne. Her face, which is turned away from the light, lies mostly in shadow. (The full effect of this dramatic chiaroscuro is no longer apparent, due to a brutal overcleaning of the face.) The picture conveys a mood of introspection and resignation. Both Mother and Child have foreknowledge of the Passion, which is represented by the grapes that Jesus grasps. This is a real mother who has accepted that she will lose her son. Yet Masaccio has transformed this plain, awkward woman into the Mother of God. The medieval focus on the perfect world to come has been turned on its head. With this painting, Masaccio thrust imperfection, reality, and even ugliness into the holy world.

Before Masaccio, figures in paintings were illuminated by a diffuse light from a vague source. In the Pisa altarpiece, a strong light from a distinct source sculpts the figures. Masaccio placed his illusionary light source at the upper left of the altarpiece, where there was probably a window in the Scarsi family chapel. Glistening flecks of light were created with a few well-placed strokes and dabs of his brush. Even the empty space in the painting is full of light, becoming bluer or yellower as distances change.

The central predella panel, at the bottom of the altarpiece, depicts the Adoration of the Magi. The Wise Men approach with their gifts for the infant Christ while their retainers struggle with some unruly horses. It is a masterpiece of drama, perspective, and foreshortening. The Magi and the retainers are dressed like contemporary Florentines, and the hills in the background are Tuscan. The horses turn their necks and toss their heads, showing a bright black eye here, a raised hoof there. Folds in cloaks are carefully foreshortened, shadows play across the ground, light curves off the saddles and glistens on gold-decorated tack. If you first see the picture reproduced in a book, you assume it must be quite large, perhaps even wall-size—and yet it is only eight inches high by two feet long.

When Masaccio set up shop in Florence, he was befriended by Brunelleschi and Donatello, who had recently worked out a way to represent space using imaginary converging lines and vanishing points—linear perspective. Masaccio experiments with this concept in the altarpiece, successfully in the small predella panel depicting St. Peter being nailed to the cross upside down, and less successfully in the Crucifixion (the upper panel of the altarpiece), which shows Christ nailed to the cross, flanked by St. John the Evangelist and Mary. Below the cross, with her back turned to the viewer, Mary Magdalen sinks to the ground, her arms flung upward, her long golden hair spilling wildly down her back over a scarlet cloak. The outburst of agony is shocking in its intensity, and the abstract geometry of the figure seems entirely modern. Masaccio's struggle with perspective, however, has made Christ's head sink grotesquely into his shoulders, and he appears to be without a neck.

STAATLICHE MUSEEN, BERLIN GRANGER



f the Magi appeared in a panel below the central painting of the Madonna and Child Enthroned.

When I saw this painting in the Capodimonte Museum, in Naples, I lay down on the floor in front of it to reproduce the viewer's original perspective, and it seemed to me, in the ten seconds before the museum guards gave me the bum's rush out of the gallery, that the neck problem vanished. Masaccio intended the painting to be viewed from well below it, but he failed to carry the foreshortening through the rest of the picture.

When Berenson found the Pisa Madonna, in 1907, he wrote that "the discovery of the center cannot but encourage" the search for the sides, and he warned against speculation about the altarpiece while these crucial panels were still missing. But, as time went by, the panels did not surface, and historians of course did speculate about how they might have related to the central panel. (A graduate student at Columbia, Michael McAuliffe, has been using a computer and Adobe Photoshop to digitize the known panels of the Pisa altarpiece and assemble them into various configurations and reconstructions; the results have not yet been published, but they promise to be interesting.)

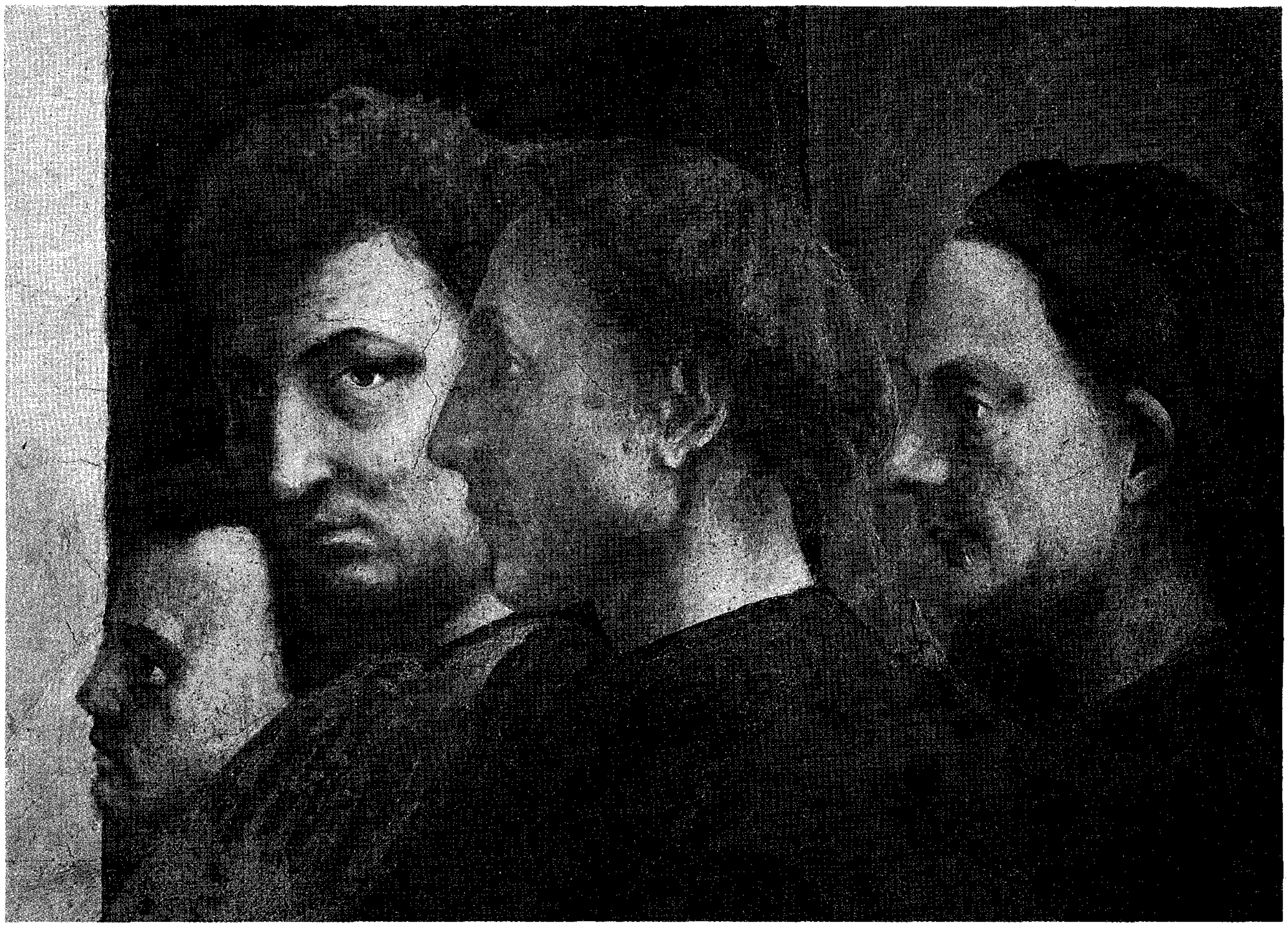
Most art historians assumed that the central panel and the two side panels were three paintings separated by gilded colonettes. But in 1966 the Harvard art historian John Shearman concluded that the Madonna that Berenson found was probably the central part of a single painting that had been broken into three pieces, perhaps to render it more marketable. He had noticed two very faint shadows falling from left to right along the stairs in front of the Madonna—cast, he surmised, by figures standing to the left. Shearman published a possible reconstruction of the altarpiece which showed the four saints—Peter, John the Baptist, Julian, and Nicholas—standing at different levels around the Madonna, all in the same space.

An altarpiece with an undivided central field would have been highly unusual in the fourteen-twenties, and other art historians, notably Christa Gardner von Teuffel, have pointed out that a carpenter built the altarpiece to the specifications of the Scarsi family and that Masaccio would not have had the opportunity to do anything structurally radical. But altarpieces with an undivided central field began to appear shortly after Masaccio worked in Pisa. Might he not have asked the carpenter to remake the central panels? Or could he not have rebuilt them himself? He came from a family of woodworkers.

I wish I had asked Curtis Shell what he saw when he closed his eyes and visualized the missing panels. Curtis died in 1974, before I had spent much time in Italy myself and became interested in the Pisa polyptych. I asked his wife, Birgit, if he had ever talked to her about his mental reconstruction of the altarpiece. She couldn't remember any specific details, but she offered an interesting idea herself. (She, too, is an art historian.) She pointed out that if the painting had been broken into three pieces, and if the saints were standing on different levels, as Shearman postulated, the side panels would have looked ungainly once they were on their own. Each of them would have shown two saints, standing on different steps, one higher than the other. To make them salable, the two side pieces would probably have been cut in half again, so that there would be only one saint per panel. If this was the case, art historians should be looking for four panels, not two. Perhaps, Birgit said, this is why the panels have never been found. On the other hand, if the two saints on either side of the Madonna stood close together, with their figures overlapping, as in Shearman's reconstruction, it would have been impossible to cut them apart into self-contained figures. In that case, the panels might have been junked on the spot.

If four cut-up segments of the panels do exist, they would be about sixty inches high by fourteen inches wide. Each one would depict a saint standing near or on a step incised with a strigillated frieze, probably with some small angels nearby. The background would be gold leaf. Each saint would be holding his emblem: a long cross for St. John; for St. Julian, the sword with which he accidentally killed his parents; three gold balls for St. Nicholas; and the keys to the church for St. Peter. St. Peter would likely be wearing a yellow-orange robe, as he does in the Brancacci Chapel. There would be a strong fall of light from the upper left, and the figures would be (in Vasari's words) "lively and colorful." According to an art-market expert, if a panel turned up outside Italy and was offered for sale in good condition, it might fetch anywhere from twenty million to eighty million dollars.

In 1958, an architect who was training to be a priest happened into a half-ruined church in San Giovenale a Cascia, one of the decaying, nearly empty towns that lie along what in the Middle Ages was an important pilgrimage route through the Pratomagno Mountains. While he was praying there, he raised his head, saw a painting of a Madonna in the central panel of a triptych, and recognized it as a Masaccio, because, he said later, she looked like the Madonna in the Pisa altarpiece. ("Worse luck!!!" Birgit wrote me about Curtis's failure to stop at San Giovenale.) The *parroco* of San Giovenale, Don Renato Lombardi, wrote to the Soprintendenza of Fine Arts in Florence about the discovery. There was no reply to his letter. He wrote several more times. A few years went by. Then circumstances brought a brilliant young *ispettore* from the Soprintendenza to the area, a man named Luciano Berti. He saw the painting and realized that it might be a juvenile Masaccio. He could see, partly obscured underneath a black frame, what looked like an inscription. The painting was brought to Florence for restoration, and when the frame was removed a date came to light: "MCCCCXX[. . .] A DI VENTITRE DAP[RILE]"—that is, April 23, 142 . . . The last part of the year was obscured by dirt. It could be a "V" or one or more "I"s. If the date was 1422 or earlier, it would have to be a Masaccio. No one in Italy could have painted such a painting



A man with dark hair who looks out of one of the frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel in Florence may be a self-portrait of Masaccio.

at that time except him. If the date was later, even by a year or two, the attribution to Masaccio became much more tenuous, and if it was 1425 it was probably not a Masaccio.

A bit of conservation work revealed that the last numerals of the year were "II." It had been painted in 1422, when Masaccio was twenty. Not long afterward, Luciano Berti became the director of the Uffizi Gallery.

Once the Madonna was restored and exhibited triumphantly in Florence, a bureaucratic struggle broke out about who would house it. It was finally decided that the painting should be returned to the region where it was found, but not to San Giovenale, since the broken-down chapel offered no security and the town (which consisted of three families) was too isolated to accommodate tourists. The nearby Church of San Pietro, in the town of Cascia, won the right to hang the painting.

On a cold day last winter, I stopped in Cascia to see the San Giovenale triptych. The church was locked when I arrived, but after I'd done some friendly pounding and shouting, the priest, Father Ottavio Failli, appeared, followed by his terrier, Billi, who tore about, yapping excitedly. Failli is an art-history enthusiast and a great admirer of "*il grande professor Berenson.*" When he was a boy, he attended Berenson's funeral. He unlocked the church for me, punched on some lights, and stood aside. "*Eccola,*" he said, his palm extended toward a small painting that glowed against the dark stone of the nave.

The San Giovenale triptych shows the Virgin seated on a throne, holding her Child. The baby Jesus is busy eating grapes and has two fingers crammed into his mouth. The side panels depict two pairs of saints. Masaccio has already engaged some big ideas here, but not altogether successfully. The light source, while not overly diffuse, is still indistinct. The figures are solid and sculptural, but stiff and not yet monumental. The floorboards show a careful application of one-point perspective. I noticed that the wings of the kneeling angels are ruffled and unkempt, as if they had just alighted. Masaccio must have copied the wings from real bird wings, something no Florentine artist had thought to do before, but then he colored them in the fanciful Gothic rainbow style popular at the time. The wings show the state of Masaccio's rebellion—tentative and adolescent.

The Madonna's face has a disturbing, brooding quality—already the artist is rejecting Gothic ideals of beauty. She has blond hair, a receding chin, and a small mouth. I was struck by how strongly she resembles the portrait thought to be of his brother, Lo Scheggia, in the Brancacci Chapel. Masaccio's mother must have been his model. Perhaps she was the model for all his Madonnas.

Father Failli stood behind me while I looked at the painting. He pointed out details of perspective, discussed the meaning of some symbols hidden in Mary's halo, noted that the handwriting in the book held by a saint seemed to be the same as the handwriting on Masaccio's tax return. But gradually Father Failli fell silent, and we stood there, side by side, looking at the Madonna.

After a few minutes, Father Failli turned to me. "The depth of Christian faith in the painting is what gives it such power," he said. "Without faith, Masaccio could not have painted this." I felt a twinge of remorse about my own lack of faith. I wanted to see the painting the way the priest saw it.

Back outside, I asked Father Failli how to get to the church in San Giovenale a Cascia, where the painting was discovered. He shook his head. "It is difficult." He paused, thinking, then said, "Come. We will go together," and we squeezed into his battered car. He goosed the throttle, and we swerved down the mountainside on a new macadam road, then turned off onto a dirt track. After a few bone-shaking minutes, we slid to a stop before some stone buildings.

Father Failli led me to a patch of dead lawn in front of a chapel and stamped on the grass. "Right here," he cried, "is exactly where the painting hung, in this very spot. But this wing of the church was too decrepit to be rebuilt, so they tore it down."

An old woman unlocked the church and we went into a small stone room of monastic simplicity, with some pews and, above a simple altar, a photograph of the San Giovenale triptych. The painting had been much treasured by the villagers. During the war, Failli said, the priest gave it to a farmer to hide from the Germans. He put it behind his bed, and then moved it to the barn, where he placed it in an empty wine barrel that he covered with straw. When the Germans arrived, chickens had begun laying eggs on the barrel and their cackling made the farmer afraid the Germans would suspect that something was under the straw, so he moved the painting again in the dead of night. After the war, it was restored to its place above the altar. The painting had been in the chapel at least since 1441, when a church inventory reported a "*Vergine Maria bella*" there.

"And now," Father Failli said, "I will show you why Professor Berenson did not find this painting." We went ripping along another dirt road to the end of the cleared fields. An ancient abandoned cobbled road, impassable by car, led into a dark forest. Father Failli got out and set off at a vigorous pace down the track while I struggled to keep up with him. We walked around the shoulder of the mountain and dropped down into a ravine where there was a roaring brook. A mossy stone bridge tangled in vines crossed the brook. The loud dark water echoed through the bare-limbed trees, and the air smelled of ice.

"This is the old Roman road," Father Failli said. "Until a few years ago, it was the only way into San Giovenale. Look how narrow the bridge is! Professor Berenson in his big touring car could not get across. So he never came to San Giovenale." We hiked back up to the ridge and Father Failli looked at the town, a quarter mile below. "*Beh!* Who would have believed a Masaccio could be down there?" he said. It was easy to miss, even if Berenson had walked by when he was a young man.

Beyond the tiny mountain village with its dead fields were vineyards, forests, hills, plains, and towns. The oxbows of the Arno gleamed in the yellow winter light. It was a perfect Renaissance landscape. I wondered if the missing panels from Pisa were down there somewhere. And I thought about the San Giovenale triptych, a painting loved by the villagers for more than five hundred years, not for who painted it, or for the monographs and books and careers it would make, but simply because it was a *bella* Madonna. ♦

DETAIL FROM "ST. PETER ENTHRONED," BRANCACCI CHAPEL, FLORENCE/AKG

FICTION

TRADITIONS

BY WILLIAM TREVOR

JOHN STURROCK/NETWORK/SABA

They came in one by one as they always did. Hambrose, then Forrogale; Accrington, Olivier, Macluse, Newcombe, Napier. Each in turn saw the jackdaws dead on the earthen floor: seven, as there were seven of them.

"It's Leggett," Macluse said, and the others were silent.

Only Napier also suspected Leggett. The others were bewildered, except for Olivier. The birds' necks had been snapped, one of the heads twisted off. Lying in the dust, their feathers already had a lank look; their beady gaze had dulled. "Some bloody people," Newcombe said flatly, his tone empty of protest or emotion. Olivier knew it was the girl.

A bell was chiming, calling them to chapel. In the morning they never had more than those few minutes, just time enough to get to the barn and make sure the birds were all right. Usually the chiming started when the seven were already on the way back. Earlier, they'd had their morning smoke.

"Oh, God!" Macluse spat out as they hurried. Forrogale and Accrington said they now agreed it was Leggett. No one else said anything.

They taught their birds to talk. They enticed the very young ones, then clipped their wings and tamed them. There were other places where they might have kept them, but the barn was the most suitable, spacious and empty, chicken wire drawn over the aperture that was a kind of window, tacked onto the bottom of the doors. It was used for no other purpose, derelict and forgotten until a reminder that this whole area was out of bounds was again issued—an edict that regularly became forgotten also. So it had been for generations. But never before had there been a slaughter.

The jackdaws did not speak clearly when they were taught. They did not converse with one another, nor even release a single utterance that might be called a word. The sounds that came from them after hours of instruction were approximate, meaning interpreted by the listener. More satisfactory results might have been obtained, it was said, if the tongues were slit, and in the past that had been done, but not for many years now. It was felt to be not quite the thing.

With scarcely a minute to spare, the seven boys arrived at the chapel precincts, passed the line of masters waiting to make an entrance from the cloisters, and took their places, all of them sitting together. That something was wrong this morning was at once apparent to their peers; curiosity was whetted as prayers were mumbled, and hymns sung with roistering enthusiasm. The grave-faced chaplain conducted the service, briefly touching upon the temptations in the wilderness, since it was the time of year to do so. His gravity was a familiar quality in him, in no way caused by what had occurred in the night, which he did not know about. "For it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee,' " he quoted. Tidily, with that, he brought his exposition to an end. As boys and masters, all formally gowned, filed back into the fresh air, the organ voluntary was by Byrd.

There was a general dispersal while talk began, increasing in volume. Boys went several ways, to widely scattered classrooms, the masters in one direction only, to collect from their common room books that were immediately needed. Hambrose and Accrington remained together, as did Macluse and Napier and Newcombe, all three of whom belonged in a cleverer set. Forrogale had a piano lesson; Olivier had been summoned by the headmaster. Each of the seven had on his mind the outrage that had occurred, and neither resentment nor anger had receded.

Forrogale practiced while he waited for Mr. Hancock, having not practiced much in the time that had passed since the two had last met. In the headmaster's house, Olivier saw the blue light above the drawing-room door extinguished when the school butcher and handyman, Dynes, left the room. He winked at Olivier in a sinister manner, implying that he knew more than he did about Olivier's summons. The winking went unacknowledged, since it was one of Dynes' usual ploys. Olivier rapped lightly on a panel of the headmaster's door and was told to come in.

"I am disappointed," the headmaster declared at once, leading the way from the fire against which he had been warming himself to a small adjoining room untidy with books and papers and confiscated objects. A burly, heavily made man, he sat down behind a desk while Olivier stood. "Disappointed to note," he went on, "that you have failed to come up to scratch in any one of the three scientific subjects. Yet it seems you yourself had chosen the scientific side of things." He broke off to peer at a piece of paper he had drawn toward him. "Your ambitions are in that direction?"

"I was curious to know more about science, sir."

"Sit down, Olivier."

"Thank you, sir."

"You say curious?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, tell me why you are curious in that way. Remember I have a duty—and a conscience if I knowingly release upon the innocent world the ignorant and the inept. The fees at this school are high, Olivier. They are high because expectations are high. Your housemaster has said this to you. You are here this morning to be made aware of the seriousness we attach to it. When you went on to the scientific side you were not driven by vocation?"

"No, sir."

"You indulged a curiosity. You indulged yourself. That can be dangerous."

Why did the man have to speak in that pompous, prissy way? Olivier asked himself. If it was self-indulgence, simply to wish to learn more (since he knew so little) then so—a self-indulgence. In what way dangerous? he wondered, but did not ask. That he had failed to perform adequately in the laboratory had not surprised him at the time, nor did it now.

He said he was sorry, and the headmaster spoke of the school's belief in tradition, which he did on all convenient occasions. What he extolled had little, if anything at all, to do with Olivier's failure. That this was so was a tradition in itself—all deviations from required behavior assumed to have a source in careless disregard of time-hardened precepts and mores. This headmaster's predecessors had in their day advocated such attention—to the past, to the achievements of boys when they became men, to the debts they owed. In turn, Olivier's predecessors had listened with the same degree of skepticism and disdain.

"Shall we put it like this," the present headmaster suggested, "that you promise me this morning to knuckle down? That we review the circumstances in, say, five weeks' time?"

"Or I could give up science, sir."

"Give up? I hardly like the sound of that."

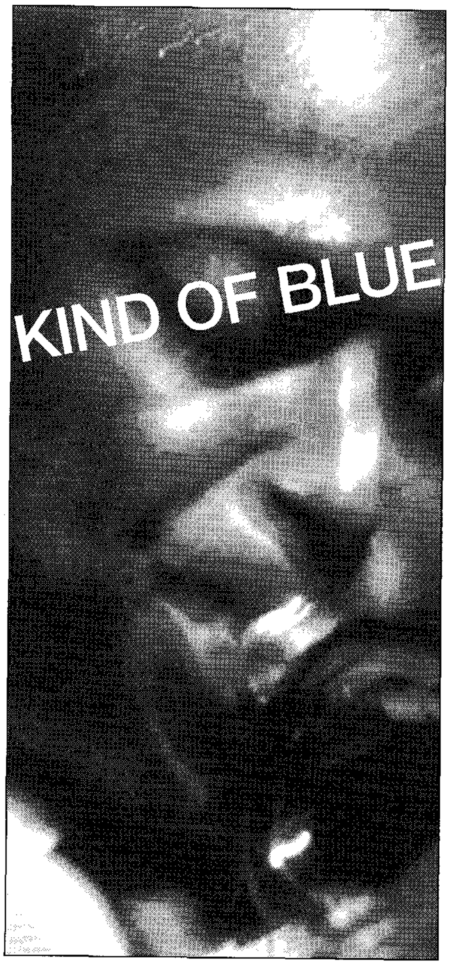
"I made a mistake, sir."

"Do not compound it, Olivier. Failure is a punishment in itself. Perhaps you might dwell on that?"

With this, Olivier was dismissed. In the great stone-paved hall beyond the study and the drawing room, he forgot at once all that had been said and returned to the subject of the slaughtered birds. Again, he reached the conclusion he had reached already: that the culprit was not another boy. Leggett would be seized after the games practices this afternoon and accused under duress. Dawdling on the journey to his classroom, Olivier anticipated that unfair revenge but knew he would still not reveal what he suspected. There was pleasure in not doing so, in holding things back, in knowing what others didn't.

Wednesdays until tea were her own. They always had been and she would have hated a change. That middle-of-the-week day she had come to regard as her private Sunday—when her alarm didn't go off, when the chapel bell and first-school bell, sounding in the distance, could be ignored. Even her unconscious knew what to do: sleep on until the morning was half gone. It was ragged sleep, made restless with dreams that were always vivid at this time, but that never mattered. Nothing was more luxurious than Wednesday mornings, than imagining between dozing and waking the untidy after-breakfast dining hall, and the silence that came suddenly when classes began, the cutlery carried to the pantries, polished clean there, carried back again, the big oak tables laid for lunch. She had Saturday evening off as well, but it wasn't the same, nothing much really, and often she stood in for one of the others, not even wanting to be paid back.

She rose this morning at half past ten, her usual Wednesday time. She read a color supplement while the kettle boiled. She opened the back door and stood there in her nightdress. Stacpole used to come to her on Wednesday mornings, the only one who ever had, the only one who in all the years had ever managed to have a free period then, eleven to a quarter to twelve. She remembered Stacpole returning to the school long afterward



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with a woman they said would be his wife, pointing out to her this place or that. She remembered wondering if she'd been pointed out herself.

She stood a little longer, relishing the soft, fresh air. Then the smell of toast drew her back into her kitchen.

They made coffee in the quarry and drank it out of jam pots. They drank it very sweet but without milk because milk was a nuisance. Then, lying on their backs in the sun, they smoked.

Leggett, meanwhile, crept back to his house, simulating lameness for as long as he estimated he could be seen. He thought they had cracked one of his ribs, but Forrogale, claiming medical knowledge, had said no, having poked it with his fingers. "Definitely not," Forrogale had said, but Leggett was not sure about that. They'd picked on him because he was underhanded: they'd said so, and Leggett knew he was. Nonetheless, he was innocent. He wouldn't have touched one of their hideous jackdaws, much less taken in his hand a head with a beak that could snap at you.

"He didn't do it," Accrington said, breaking a silence, and one at a time the others agreed. Not that duffing up Leggett was in the least to be regretted.

"Who?" Napier asked, and Olivier didn't say, "The girl."

"Unless it was Dynes," Macluse said.

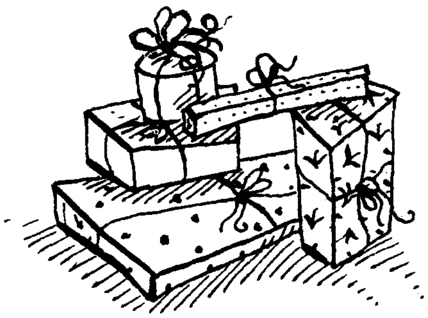
They all thought about that except Olivier. Dynes was outside the order of things; they could not duff him up or in any way harass him; they could not so much as speak to him about the matter, for although Dynes was aware that jackdaws were kept, he would most likely counter the accusation by revealing what he had previously been silent about. He was a touchy man.

"I doubt in any case it was Dynes," Accrington said. "This doesn't have his fingerprints."

Some years ago, a boy had hanged himself but had not succeeded in taking his life. It was established afterward that he had not intended to, since the noose he had prepared had never tightened, one foot pressed into a hollow in the tree he'd chosen taking all the weight. The boy had not remained at the school, though, but had been sent home, considered unbalanced. This was spoken of now, since it was surely some similar individual who had killed the birds. The names of the unstable were bandied about, recent behavior of new suspects discussed. Olivier remained silent. He was the smallest of the boys, though not the youngest, his dark hair in a fringe above a sallow complexion. His looks stood out among those of his companions, a delicacy about him that the others could not claim. There was—or so it seemed when Olivier was there as a comparison—a carelessness in how the others had been made. Adolescence was marked in them by jacket sleeves too short, unruly hair and coarsened voices and blemished skin beneath beginners' stubble.

The last of the coffee was drunk, cigarette butts thrown into the embers of the fire before the charred remains of sticks were scattered. Still in a group, the boys returned to the school, then to the barn that had been their jackdaws' home. Hambrose, who knew the conventions through assisting in the work there, made a detour to collect a spade and advised on where it was best to dig a common grave. One by one the birds were dropped into it. Macluse piled back the clay and then the capturing of replacement birds began.

Long before Olivier came to the school, there had been incidents in the past that word of mouth had later made famous: the ringing of the chapel bell in the middle of the night; the removal of a Renoir print—"Young Girl Reading"—from its place between the windows in one of the prefects' common rooms; the purloining of a cigarette lighter and a pipe from a pocket of Dobie-Gordon's overcoat; the mysterious collapse of the central-heating system. Occurring over many years, the incidents had in common only that no culprit had ever been brought to book; nor did it seem possible that the same



hand could have been responsible for any two of the occurrences, let alone all of them, since the length of a boy's stay at the school did not allow it. Seven years ago—long before Olivier's arrival—there'd been the trouble in the bicycle sheds: the random deflating of tires. Then nothing had happened until the killing of the jackdaws.

It was purely intuition that caused Olivier to suspect the girl, not just of the latest outrage but of the others, too. And though certain that he was right, so sure was his instinct, so unassailable his sensing of a purpose in all this, he could not think why one of the dining-hall maids should have wished to alert the school to fire at one o'clock in the morning or what possible use she could have had for Dobie-Gordon's pipe. Somewhere here, there was revenge, he had conjectured when first he'd had his idea, but had since rejected the speculation, for he considered it too pat and obvious. He thought so again on the day of Leggett's duffing up when he stared at the girl, at teatime, trying to catch her when she wasn't looking. He was skilled at breaking into privacies without the knowledge of the person observed; he prided himself on that, but twice, or even three times, he suddenly had to drop his scrutiny, taken unawares by having his gaze returned. Bella, this maid's name was, but "the girl" identified her in the dining hall and beyond it.

Along one arm, plates touching to keep them balanced, the dining-hall maids could carry five at a time, each bearing a sausage roll, or toast with beans, or scrambled eggs. Today it was sausage roll, two sausages in each envelope of pastry, the pastry dark brown and flaky. At St. Andrew's second table you passed your sausage roll to Chom, who ate it for you. Elsewhere in the dining hall more usual conventions prevailed, unwanted sausage rolls disposed of later.

Olivier's place this evening at St. David's third table was on the prefect's right, a position that recurred every twelve days, each boy but for the prefect moving on a place each day. The prefect did not speak except to request the salt or pepper or jam; it was his privilege to be aloof. The warm plates were passed along each row of boys, the prefect's fetched at the last moment and mustard brought with it.

The maid who interested Olivier did not serve this table. He watched her at the far end of the dining hall, where the St. Patrick's tables were, where Accrington and Newcombe and Hambrose sat. Only Olivier, among the boys who tamed jackdaws, was in St. David's. Forrogale and Macluse and Napier were in St. George's, the house renowned for games.

The noise in the dining hall was considerable, but the only snatches of conversation that reached Olivier were from his own table, all else being lost in the general din. The Saturday-evening debate this week was to be about the existence or otherwise of ghosts. This was talked about in advance, and an item of national news—the conviction of a doctor who had murdered a number of his female patients—was discussed, the death penalty advocated or opposed. Olivier drank his tea and passed his cup and saucer to where, at the other end of the table, two boys had charge of a large metal teapot. Then he watched the maid again. Waiting for the moment when the clearing away of plates and cutlery began, she stood now in a line with the other maids in front of the high table, which was unoccupied during this meal.

She was a "girl" in name only, a designation that carried from the past, from when she had been the youngest of the maids by many years. It honored a celebrity she had enjoyed, when her fresh beauty had time and again inspired passion in the dining hall. Such facts came into the mystery of incidents, Olivier felt himself guessing, but did not know how. She did not mind being observed: that, too, was there.

"Olivier." The prefect interrupted the blankness that followed these reflections. "Jam."

Olivier reached for the dish of apple jam, apologizing. She was a woman in late middle age now, tall, with gray hair tied back behind her cap, her features still touched with a trace of the beauty other boys had known. Olivier understood—had come to understand when first he'd been interested in her—why she was different from the other maids. It was not just the tales that lingered from the past, nor the reminder in her features that these were not exaggerated, nor her preference for silence when the other maids chattered in carefully guarded dining-hall whispers. There was something else, belonging only to her. Again her glance caught his, too far away

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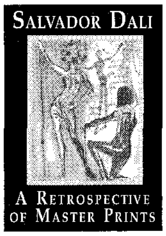

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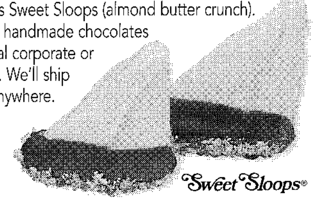

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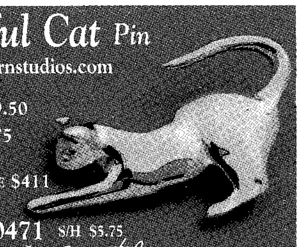

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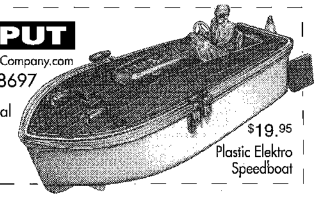

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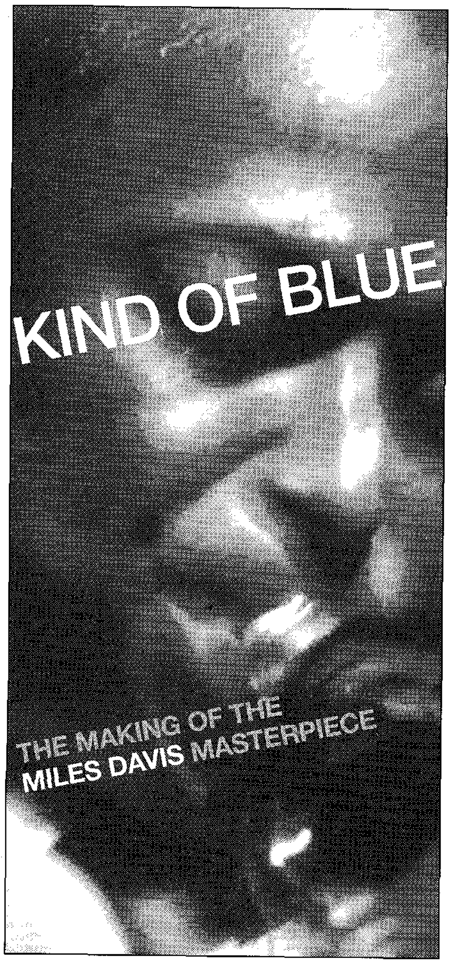
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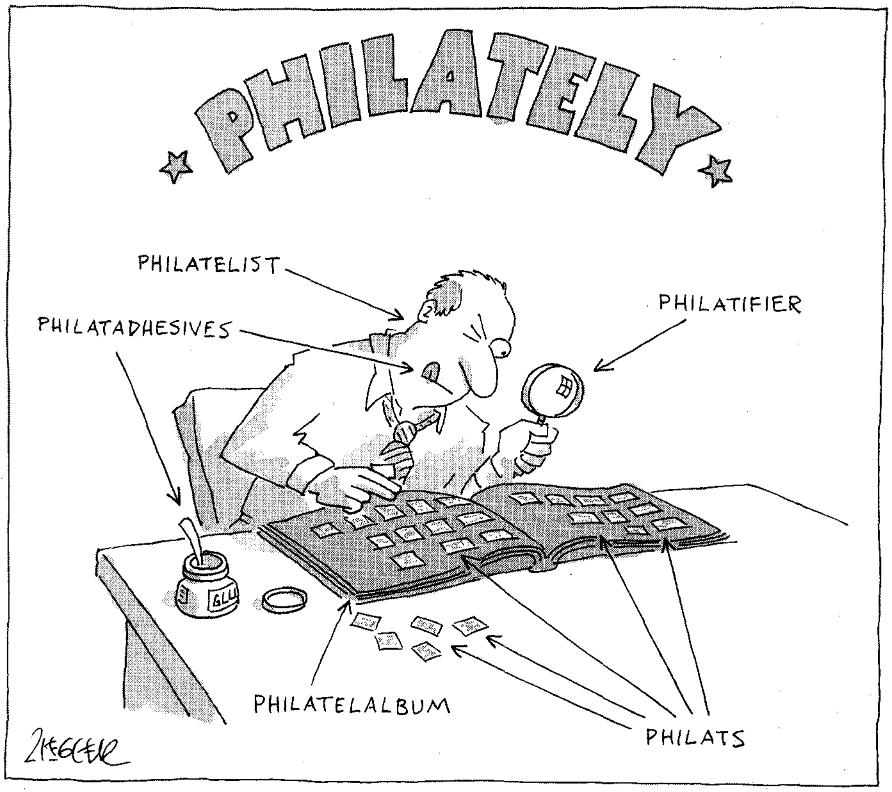

for Olivier to be certain that it did so intentionally, but he was certain anyway.

The gray sausage meat within his pastry smelled a bit; not that it was bad, Olivier knew, for the smell was of sausage and of meat; only that the cooking had drawn some excess of natural odor from it. The first time she'd looked in his direction he hadn't recognized her and would have passed her by, because she wasn't in her uniform. Often since, he'd noticed her on the back drive, alone on her afternoon off or when her duties for the day were done, not in a bunch as the others usually were. She never smiled, nothing like that, and he didn't himself.

There was the clatter of standing up, the benches pushed back from the tables, the shuffling of shoes on polished boards. "*Per Christum Dominum nostrum*," the senior prefect intoned, and then there were the evening's announcements, the duty master hurrying off, the prefects going when the announcements finished, one falling in behind another, interrupted conversations picked up as the dining hall emptied but for the maids.

It would not be the birds again. There was always a variation, and Olivier had once tried to guess what the next transgression would be, but had failed hopelessly. He would not be here when it occurred, and he imagined returning for some Old Boys' event and hearing something casually mentioned. He imagined not quite knowing what had happened and having to ask outright in the end. For a moment, he wanted to reassure his friends that the new birds would be safe, that there would not be a repetition. But he desisted. It was a time for cigarettes again, and the seven trooped off to the stone hut they had built for that purpose, out of sight in the corner of a field.

That evening, the headmaster himself spoke at compline, which on rare occasions he did. He told a parable of his own invention: how a man, repeating every day of his life a certain pattern of behavior, made the pattern richer. He told of how, in a dream, this man had deviated once from his chosen way and been harshly judged by God, and punished with failure where all his life there had been success before.

Olivier recognized in the words a faintly apposite note and wondered if inspiration for them had perhaps come from his own deviation, and subsequent failure, in the realm of science. In ending his address, the headmaster did not omit to include a reference to the value of tra-

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dition, claiming for it and for the school it ruled a potency that must surely be the approval of the God who punished when displeased.

Later, in scanning a Horace ode with the aid of a Kelly's Key, Olivier found himself distracted, in turn, by the headmaster's overwhelming confidence in the established rites of passage through his school and by the dining-hall maid's transgressions. Were her sins the weaponry of insurrection, intended as such or simply so because they happened? What passed through her thoughts as she implemented another disturbance or discomfort? And why was it that the headmaster's beliefs and a woman's recidivistic stratagems seemed now to cling together like proximate jigsaw pieces? "*Angustam amice pauperiem pati, robustus acri militia puer condiscat,*" Horace had written; and Olivier matched Latin and English as best he could, his key's translation not being word for word. *Let the youth, robustly made, learn cheerfully to endure, amid severe military duty, the hard privations of a soldier's life.*

Of course, the headmaster did not know—as all authority before him had not known—that the dining-hall maid had in her girlhood been, herself, a fragment of tradition, supplying to boys who now were men a service that had entered the unofficial annals. There was that, too, Olivier reminded himself, before he returned to winkling out which word went with which.

At the end of the day, the dining-hall maids, and the dormitory maids, and other maids with diverse duties, went home, some sharing the available space in the cars that a few of them drove, others on bicycles, some on foot to the village. Among those who walked was the girl who was now a woman. She smoked on the leafy back drive, a little behind two of her colleagues, one of whom lit the way with a torch. The skin of the boy she admired was still as smooth as porcelain though not as white, and without the blush of pink which generally went with porcelain flesh. She loved the sallow tinge, the dark eyes gazing out of it, the fringe that so perfectly followed the forehead's contour.

His image filled her consciousness as she walked on, his voice the voice of boys who had long ago tenderly spoken her name. He knew, as she had guessed he

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would be the one to know, because he was the kind. She'd always known the kind.

The first of the late bells sounded, rhythmically clanging. Younger boys gathered up their books, and then their footsteps were muffled in the corridors, no conversation exchanged because noise was forbidden while the upper- and middle-school classes continued their preparation. Olivier read "Cakes and Ale," the orange-backed book hidden from view behind "Raleigh and the British Empire" and a guide to laboratory experiments. A note interrupted this, passed along the row of desks to him: "Was it Chapman, do you think?" Olivier scribbled, "Maybe," and passed the scrap of paper back to Newcombe. You had to lie. They'd be suspicious if you kept denying it whenever they mentioned anyone.

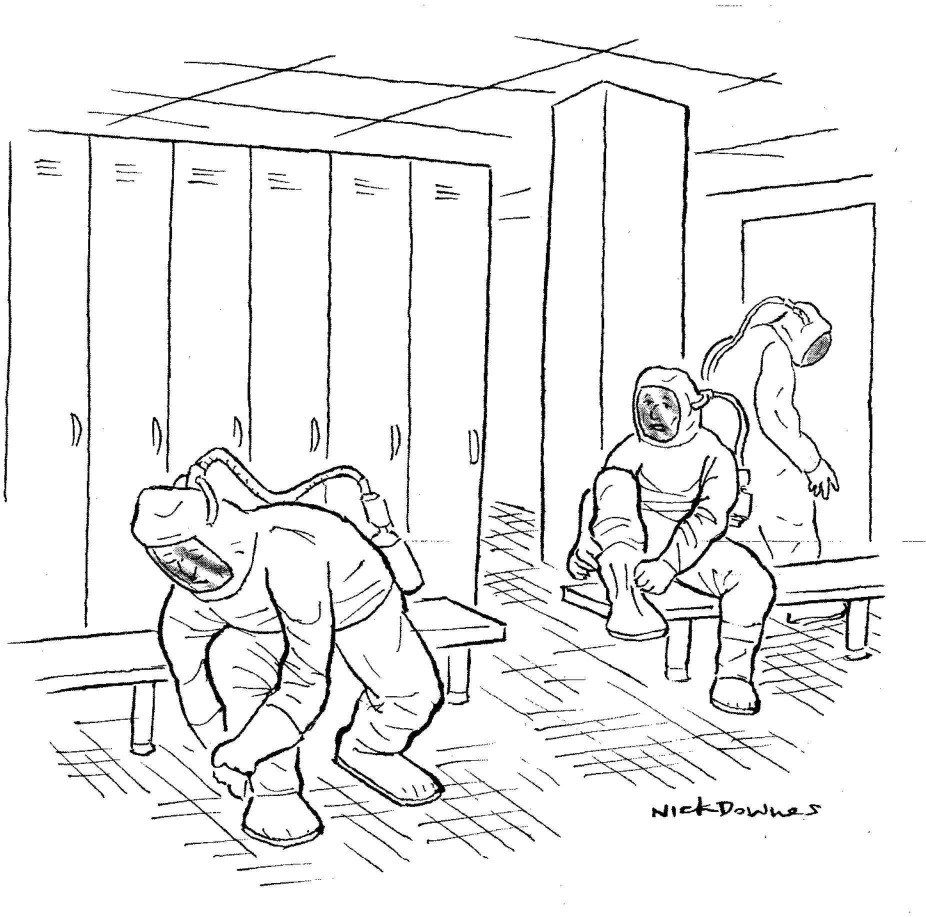
Someone would guess: one after another, she had caused the incidents to happen so that someone would guess. As certain as he was about everything else, so he was certain that this last conjecture was not fanciful. He knew no more; he doubted that he ever would. In his mind's eye he saw her as once or twice he had when he'd been out and about at this time himself: in her navy-blue coat, the belt tied loosely, and a head scarf with horses on it.

"Cheers, Bella," the two in front called out, one after the other, as they turned into Parsley Lane. "Cheers."

She loathed that cheap word, so meaningless, used all the time now. "Good night," she called back.

Voices and the occasional laugh accompanied the bobbing torchlight in Parsley Lane. She went a different way and heard only the hooting of an owl. She came to the Railwayman public house, where there were voices and laughter again, and then passed Mrs. Hodges', where the television was turned loud in the front room.

Her mother, still alive, would be in her bed: she pretended that. And he would be silent among the churchyard yews, and would say nothing while she went by. Then, when she had brought the tea upstairs and had sat a while to watch the old eyelids droop, she'd slide back the wooden bolt and move the curtain an inch to the right, leaving it for just a moment.



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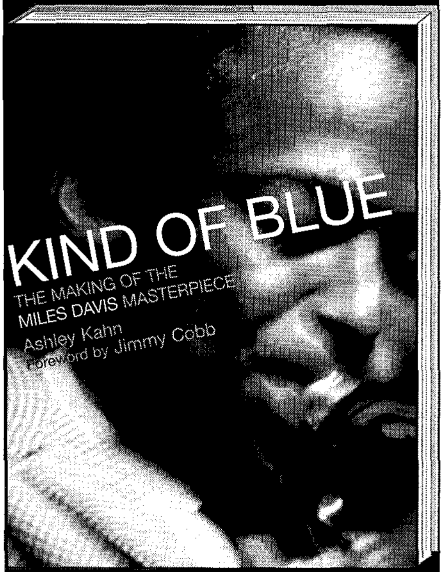

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He would come in without a knock.

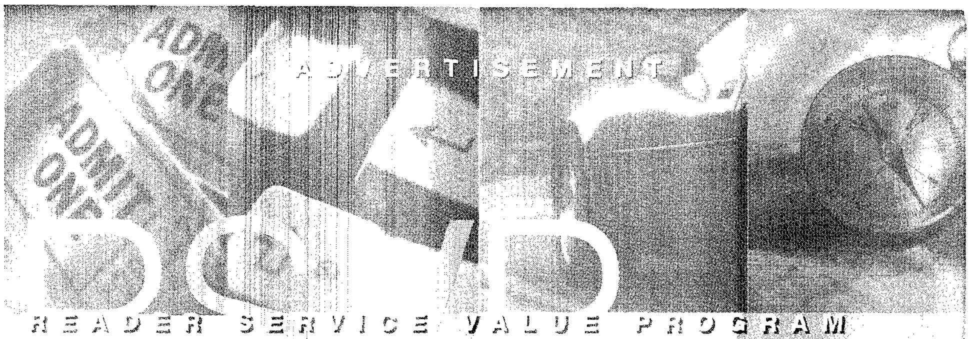
Someone leaving the Railwayman called after her, saying good night, and she called back. She could have had any of them; she still could, for all she knew. My God, she thought, the stifled life it would have been, with any one of them!

She didn't mind the shortcut by the churchyard, not any more. She'd passed through the lines of gravestones too often, the Greshams' great family vault damaged and open in one place, the smashed, forgotten wreaths eerie when there was moonlight. The odor she'd once associated with the dead was old leaves rotting.

The cottage where all her life she'd lived was the last in the village. Her father had left it every morning of her childhood to go to work at the quarry; he'd died upstairs, where her mother had, too. A boy had come on the day her mother died, and she'd had to send him away, head of St. Andrew's he'd been, Tateman. *La même chose:* it was he who'd taught her that, and *chacun à son goût*, making her pout her lips to get the sounds. Long afterward, she'd imagined travelling with him, all over France and Germany, saying "*la même chose*" herself when she was offered a dessert, wanting what he'd had. Fair-haired he'd been, not at all like the present one, whose name she did not know.

She turned the latchkey in her front door and drew the curtains in the room she'd walked straight into, the heavy one over the door to keep the draught out. Two bars of the electric fire warmed her ankles when she sat down, with tea and *petits beurres*. The secret side of it they'd always relished, as much as the other in a way. And she had, too—not quite as much but almost.

When the dormitory had quietened, Olivier thought about her again. He wondered how, when she was young, her expression had changed when her mood did. He imagined her demure, for there was about her sometimes in the dining hall a trace of that as she stood waiting for grace to be said, while the others were impatient. Conjecturing again, he saw her in a different coat, without a head scarf, hair blown about. He saw her uniform laid out, starched and ready on an ironing board, a finger damped before the iron's heat was tested. He saw her stockinged feet and laughter in her eyes, and then her nakedness. ♦



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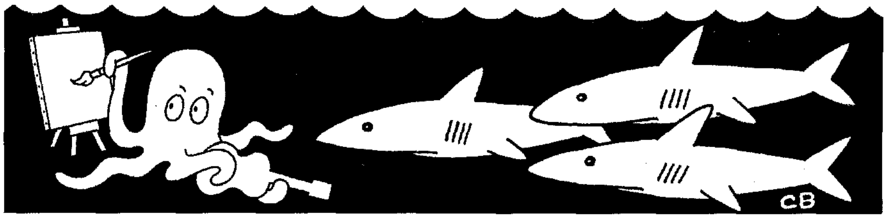
THE CRITICS



A CRITIC AT LARGE

IN YOUR DREAMS

The world through the eyes of Luis Buñuel.

BY ANTHONY LANE

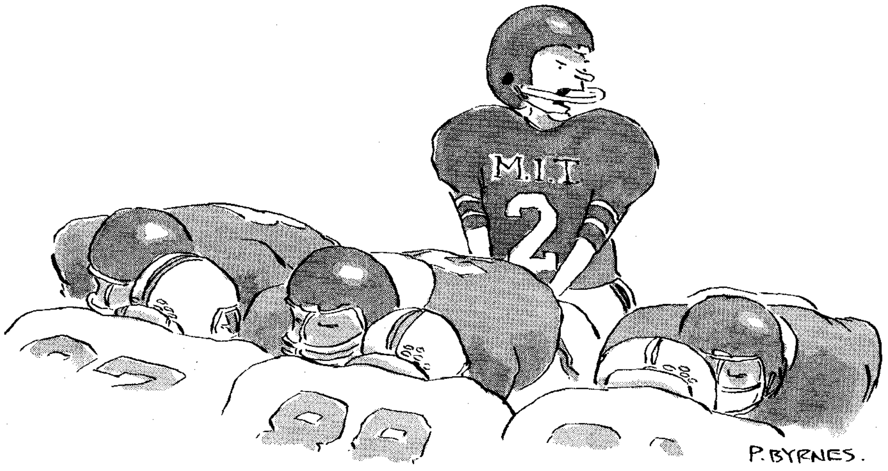
The first thing to say about Luis Buñuel, movie director and disturber of the peace, is that he looked the part. The great filmmakers, however rare their own appearances in front of the camera, almost always come to resemble their collected works. No one could sit through a Hitchcock season, for example, and imagine that its creator was a carefree and sexually contented beanpole. Godard is the mad professor, beloved of his students and nobody else; Howard Hawks is the sly jock with money and girls to burn; Billy Wilder grins like a miniature Devil from the margins of a gilded manuscript—the imp who knows too much. Buñuel beats them hollow: that square, sawed-off head, the ripe, amusable mouth, the martial breadth of brow and chin. And, most of all, there are the eyes. Hooded above and pouched below, they shimmer with the virtues, or vices in disguise, of the Buñuelian gaze: dignity, lubricity, and doubt. You can easily picture yourself being hypnotized by this man; sit through a sample of his movies, and you will think you have been.

Your best chance is now available at the Museum of Modern Art, which has organized a fulsome overview of the Master's domain. The season, which runs until January 6th, includes a screwball comedy from 1949, adaptations of "Wuthering Heights" and "Robinson Crusoe," and even the shortened version of Leni Riefenstahl's "Triumph of the Will," which Buñuel edited for MOMA during the Second World War. Then, there are the greatest hits: you can catch a fresh case of the jitters from "Un Chien Andalou" (1929), test the sincerity of your anarchist leanings against "L'Âge d'Or" (1930), leer at Jeanne Moreau and her glittering little boots in "Diary of a Chambermaid" (1964), struggle vainly to pretend that you are not turned on by "Belle de Jour" (1967), and wonder if you are among those under suspicion in "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (1972). The most beguiling of his comedies, "Discreet Charm" was a hit; Buñuel's gaggle of well-dressed characters, continually meeting up for meals that are pulled or postponed at the last minute, may have been meant to indict the metronomic cravings of the middle class, but to anyone who has ever prowled the Upper East Side at nine o'clock with an empty stomach and no reservation the film feels like an authentic vote of sympathy.

Its success spoke of another possibility, one that is now almost unthinkable: moviegoers can be stretched, and they can learn to love it. Buñuel's movie is a picaresque, yet it never rambles; it asks you to keep up, to follow the leakage of one story into the next, and to join in the fun when the diners take their places at a table and find themselves on the stage of a theatre, with the curtain rising, and a prompter hissing their lines. Is Buñuel implying that the social round is no more than a

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARY ELLEN MARK

Buñuel and Catherine Deneuve on the set of "Tristana," in Spain, in 1970.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"01101001, 00111011, 00011010, hut, hut!"

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bad charade? If so, he doesn't say as much, preferring to flatter us with an outrageous suggestion: work it out for yourselves.

Buñuel was born a century ago, in February, 1900, the eldest of seven children. He came from Aragon, in the northeast of Spain; his birthplace, Calanda, was not far from that of Goya. In his delectable autobiography, "My Last Sigh"—published in 1982, the year before his death—Buñuel wrote of his home town, "The Middle Ages lasted until World War I. . . . The same gestures were repeated from father to son, mother to daughter. Progress, a word no one seemed to have heard, passed Calanda by, just like the rain clouds." The sounds that beat the time of Luis's childhood were those of bells and drums—the notorious drums of Calanda, which are pounded by the menfolk without cease for an entire day, beginning at noon on Good Friday. "By the early hours of Saturday morning, the skin of the drums is stained with blood," Buñuel wrote. He himself took part in the ceremony until well into adulthood, and the echo of that sound carries into his films; many of them are sparsely scored, requiring no lush tunes to make an emotional point but pitted instead with gunfire, drumrolls, and the ringing of the Angelus—the soundtrack of worship and war.

Buñuel's father cuts an admirable figure, especially for those of us who treasure the lazy and the lax. "The fact of the matter is that my father did absolutely nothing," his son says. In Zaragoza, where the family spent much of the year, Leonardo Buñuel's most demanding physical task, according to Luis, was to carry a jar of caviar down the street. There is something about the neatness of this image—the careful asceticism of the action, spiked with the luxury of the goods—that slots unmistakably into the Buñuel armory. It makes me think of all the little containers that litter his films, from the striped box that hangs around the neck of the bicycling man in "Un Chien Andalou" to the musical box in "The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz" (1955), which the fantasy-fuelled hero believes to have murderous properties, and so to the fabulous, secretive casket in "Belle de Jour," which buzzes like a delinquent bee and intrigues all those who peek inside.

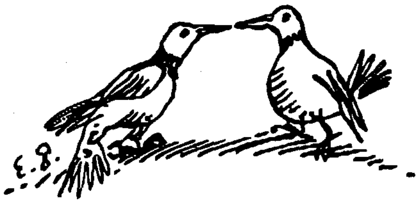
Buñuel was educated in Zaragoza, first at the College of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, then at the Jesuit College of the Saviour; he served at Mass, sang in the choir, and became, by his own account, fluent in Latin. It is a commonplace to regard Buñuel as the leading anticlerical light of the cinema, and to applaud him for the unstinting siege that he laid against religious hypocrisy. "He is a deeply Christian man, and he hates God as only a Christian can," Orson Welles said of him. Of course, you can only hate something that you know to exist; the Almighty is the cause of much defiance and disappointment in Buñuel's films, but nowhere could I find any denial of His presence. The extent of His efficacy, let alone that of the Church, is another matter. "Simon of the Desert" (1965) is the fable of an early hermit who lives atop a pillar, casting about for godly things to do. ("Who can I bless now?" he asks vaguely.) A man with stumps for arms prays to be healed, and Simon grants his wish, but the miracle backfires; the first thing that the man does with his restored hand is to cuff his small daughter over the head and tell her to shut up. That Buñuel lost his faith as a teen-ager seems to me less interesting than the tenacity with which the habits of faith—the rhythms of ritualistic behavior, the hallucinogenic draw of decorum—swung as smoothly as a censer through the calm of his career. His characters, left to their own devices, will invariably worship something, but it tends to be the shape of women's legs. Just to make the point, "Él" (1952) begins with the courtly Francisco falling in love with the devout Gloria—or, to be precise, with a glimpse of her feet and calves—right in the middle of the Mass. Buñuel was the first upstanding heretic in cinema, and the last.

At the age of seventeen, he went to Madrid, and moved into the Residencia de Estudiantes. There, among other things, he cultivated the banjo, the boxing ring, and the brothel; he also discovered a rare talent for putting people into a trance. His studies followed a patternless course, from agronomy to industrial engineering to entomology to philosophy; even when he wasn't sure where he was going, Buñuel could rely on his good taste—including, of course, a taste for the devilishly bad—and a surge of bullish momentum. That flirtation with entomology, for instance: did he know how useful it would be? Could he somehow foresee all the shiny automata that throng his early works: the ants that scurry over the palm in "Un Chien Andalou," the fighting scorpions that herald "L'Âge d'Or," or the brief tutorial on the malarial mosquito in "Land Without Bread"? Even cooler than Buñuel the intellectual vagabond is Buñuel the picker of friends. His memories of that time brim with a host of Spanish artists and writers, including Lorca and Salvador Dali, and with an instructive lexicon of Spanish attitudes; it is worth acquainting oneself with the niceties of *chulería* ("virile insolence") and *morcillismo* ("a kind of manipulative humor"), because, although Buñuel spent decades in exile, much of it self-imposed, he always travelled with a store of these patriotic spices, adding a pinch of turn-of-the-century Calanda or a twist of twenties Madrid to even his most far-flung concoctions.

His itinerary, on leaving Spain in 1925, was a series of distinct chapters. He went to Paris, as you might expect, and made "Un Chien Andalou" and "L'Âge d'Or," loading his pockets with stones for the première of the latter, in case of trouble. A wise move, as it happened; when the movie turned out to be a rampant endorsement of sexual hunger, with musical soirées and government delegations alike being interrupted by the need for fornication, the cinema was stormed by the Anti-Jewish League and other furies of the right. To the ravenous Buñuel, this was easy meat; he later introduced a screening of the movie with the words "What I want is for you *not* to like the film, to protest. I would be sorry if it pleased you." In 1930, in the space of a few months he received an invitation to attend the Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers, in the Ukraine, and a call from M-G-M. As career choices go, it must be a world first, and Buñuel decided on Hollywood, where his proudest achievement was to be thrown off the set by Greta Garbo. With exquisite timing, he arrived back in Europe just after a socialist republic had been declared in his homeland. The climate of that era suited Buñuel, and the product of the ensuing years was his bone-dry documentary "Land Without Bread" (1933). For forty dumbstruck minutes, we are stranded in a forgotten, infertile region of Spain, where children die of throat infections in the street and the only smiles are those of the mentally handicapped. There have been complaints from modern residents that Buñuel faked or forced his evidence, but by the time of his visit he was a trained Surrealist, guaranteed to focus on the object that compels and repels; what is more, he was on the side of the sufferers. "Land Without Bread"—no metaphor, in that wheatless place—is the tough link between a refined artistic movement and the rawness of political protest.

Buñuel was not a politician; his gifts lay elsewhere, in images that both slithered and snapped, like eels, and that would make any politician nervous. Even a polemic as direct as "Land Without Bread," which should have lent weight to the left, was rejected by Republican authorities, who wanted their rustics to look happy. Buñuel befriended many Communists but was never, as far as one can gather, an active member of the Communist Party. "Viridiana" (1961), the tale of a novice nun who inherits her uncle's estate, has an enviable reputation for blasphemy (one shot is an artful parody of Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper"), yet I find it no less merciless toward the notion of class solidarity. When the peasants finally take over their employer's house, they lurch headlong into gluttony and rape; no card-carrying Communist, sworn to uphold the perfectibility of man, would have countenanced such a scene, and Buñuel had as little time for the sentimentalizing of the proletariat as he did for the glamorizing of its overlords. He may have described "Un Chien Andalou" as "an incitement to murder," but when it came to real bullets, in the Spanish Civil War, he was disgusted by the killing of priests. (One thinks of W. H. Auden, whose poem on the conflict made infamous reference to "the necessary murder," a phrase the poet later withdrew.) A Buñuel film bathes in anarchy, but real chaos—the splintering of the revolutionary left into factions—is bare of blitheness and poetry, and the war, far from hardening the director's political creeds, merely deepened what he called "my fundamental need for order and peace."

Buñuel spent much of the Second World War in Hollywood, which could never quite decide what to make of this singular figure. In 1946, he moved to Mexico, reforging his contact with Hispanic culture; the result was "Los Olvidados" (1950), as down and dirty a film as he would ever make. After a decade and a half of strongly brewed melodramas, few of them free of Surrealist surfeit, he returned in triumph—or, to some onlookers, in disgrace, which was his preferred version of triumph—to the uncertain embrace of his homeland. "Viridiana" represented Spain at the Cannes Film Festival in 1961; the director insured that no one from the Franco government saw the film until after it screened, by which time all complaint was far too late. That it was then banned in Spain and condemned by the Vatican proved that the middle-aged revolutionary, the magician with the bomb under his hat, was still on active service. It was not until 1970, and the chill of "Tristana," that he was able to work in Spain; the intervening years found Buñuel, a tireless bird of passage, shooting his most distinctive and finely feathered films, such as "The Exterminating Angel" (1962) and "Belle de Jour" (1967), in Mexico and France. Scorning any hint of a whimper, he finished off with a bang: the last image of his last movie, "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977), is a loud explosion. Buñuel was back where he had begun.



Some months ago, I met a couple at a party. They were English but, until recently, had lived in France, where their first child, a daughter, was born. She arrived prematurely, and was delivered in a provincial hospital; there were no major problems, but her eyes were sticky and gummed shut. The medical staff took her to an adjoining room to clean her up, while the husband stayed to comfort his exhausted wife. Suddenly, he told me, "I had a terrible feeling that something was wrong. I pushed open the door, and there was this doctor, leaning over my newborn daughter, holding a scalpel to her eye."

The very thought of it makes you wince; the proximity of steely hardness to tender flesh—the just made child confronted by its first man-made object—brushes against our most basic terror of vulnerability. Even as the father concluded his tale, drawing moans from those around, I was thinking: Buñuel. To be specific, I thought of "Un Chien Andalou," the seventeen-minute assault that was launched upon Paris by Buñuel and his collaborator, Salvador Dali, in 1929. Less than two minutes into the picture, a man—played by the stocky, unmissable figure of Buñuel himself—stands on a balcony, gazing wolfishly at the moon. Cut to the face of a woman. Cut back to the moon; a thin slice of cloud drifts across its face. Cut to an eye; a razor blade knifes neatly and without hesitation across the eyeball, whose contents well and spill like an outsized tear. Cut.

At this point, if you are of a nervous disposition, you faint. (Similar reactions have greeted the blinding on the Odessa steps, in "Battleship Potemkin," and the vacant iris of Janet Leigh, on the white bathroom floor of "Psycho." Three of the most famous closeups in cinema, in other words, are of eyes, either damaged or dead. This is no coincidence; what do you think we are watching with?) Even hardened horror fans, sanguine habitués of gash and gore, tend to flinch at these few seconds; film historians are less surprised, being aware that most of the strong jolts in cinema, like most of the best laughs, are to be found in the first third of its existence. It is an argument that spreads far beyond the movie theatres; one of the unfading signs—the birthmarks—of the major works of modernism is that they refuse to relinquish their power to shock. The first time you hear "The Rite of Spring," you take leave of your skin—not that you are transplanted back to 1913, but that 1913 keeps occurring over and over again, like a pagan liturgy, whenever the piece is played. Even long-term lovers of "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" continue to bruise themselves on that armor-plated anvil of a face on the far right. And so it is with "Un Chien Andalou," which is usually treated as a fusillade in the Surrealists' noisy quarrel with civilization, yet which displays all the metallic intelligence and narrative rationing of high modernism, and almost none of the capering silliness that blights and dates so much of the Surrealist melee. It was a film waiting to happen: not an artifact in the museum of culture but a pathological première, forever primed to open big.

Did Buñuel die down after this, even go a little soft? There are quiet patches in his output, to be sure, yet the more closely you look at the œuvre, the more the chronology condenses. You can smile, or shudder, at something from a film of the nineteen-seventies, only to realize that the elderly prankster is revisiting a device of his youth. When a terrorist suspect in "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" is wired to the strings of a grand piano, with an electric current running through them, the Buñuel enthusiast will be spirited back to the pair of grand pianos that are hauled into a room in "Un Chien Andalou," with a rotting donkey's head protruding over the keys. ("The Godfather," with its horse-head-in-the-bed trick, was not the first film to make use of decayed beast.) As for high-heeled shoes and stockings, the stock-in-trade of every proud pornographer, it is easier to list the few Buñuel films in which they do *not* appear than the many in which they do. The various tributaries of his obsessions streamed together, so that the light domestic madcap of "El Gran Cavalera" (1949) could mingle, in Buñuel's memory, with the erotic logic of "L'Âge d'Or" to produce "The Phantom of Liberty" (1974), the most free-flowing of nightmares.

Everyone recalls the sequence, late in that picture, in which guests are politely ushered into a dining room; around the table are lavatories, where they perch, with skirts and pants lowered, to make conversation. Occasionally, someone excuses himself and retreats to a small room down the hall, where he eats a brief, lonely meal. It is a straight switch: the ingestion and expulsion of food have been reversed, allowing Buñuel to point out the arbitrary nature of our social arrangements. (Last month, a district health authority in northern England was condemned by an official report, which found that elderly patients had been strapped to commodes while they ate. Again, as with the razor and the eye, Buñuel was ahead of the case.) What matters in the movie is not the conceit itself but the stylish deadpan with which both the cast and the director carry it through. Even the priests who are interrupted in their boozy, smoke-filled card game by the sight of a hatmaker from Nîmes clinging to an adjoining bed and being whipped on the buttocks by his leather-clad Jewish assistant—not, in my experience, something you see every day—seem only mildly scandalized. I can take or leave the moment in "The Milky Way" (1969) when someone dreams of a Pope being executed by a firing squad (by Buñuel's standards, it feels too blatant); what I love is the next line, as the fantasy ends and the man sitting next to the dreamer asks him, "Is there a shooting range nearby?" It is as if reverie worked by osmosis, seeping from one porous mind to another; there is a gentle telepathy in Buñuel, and he draws us into it like sleepwalkers. Only thus, I suppose, will we ever wake up to the fact that reality is mad.

The dream sequence is among the dustiest of devices to which directors resort. If you want it well done, you must turn to the old masters: to the moonbright, featureless face that greets the aging hero of "Wild Strawberries" in the street, or to the buoyant ascent of "8 1/2," when Mastroianni, with a worrying lack of effort, floats upward from a traffic jam like a departed spirit or a child's balloon. Buñuel belongs in this company, with Bergman and Fellini; he specialized not just in dream sequences but in dream films. If there is a distinction between the actual and the imagined, you wouldn't put money on it, and Buñuel cuts between the two with disconcerting straightness—no wobbling or hazing of the screen. That is why "The Exterminating Angel," his most beautiful film, can never be shaken off: it is obviously nonsensical, and it rings hideously true. The protagonists, rich and bored, gather at a town mansion for dinner and discover that they cannot leave the room they are in. They are free to go, but some nameless pressure—it could be politesse or politics, or any of the rules that we obey—keeps them penned in like sheep for weeks. They eat, rut, bicker, and sleep; a china closet, stacked with precious vases, makes do as a toilet. The ladies lining up outside to use it discuss what they have sighted within:

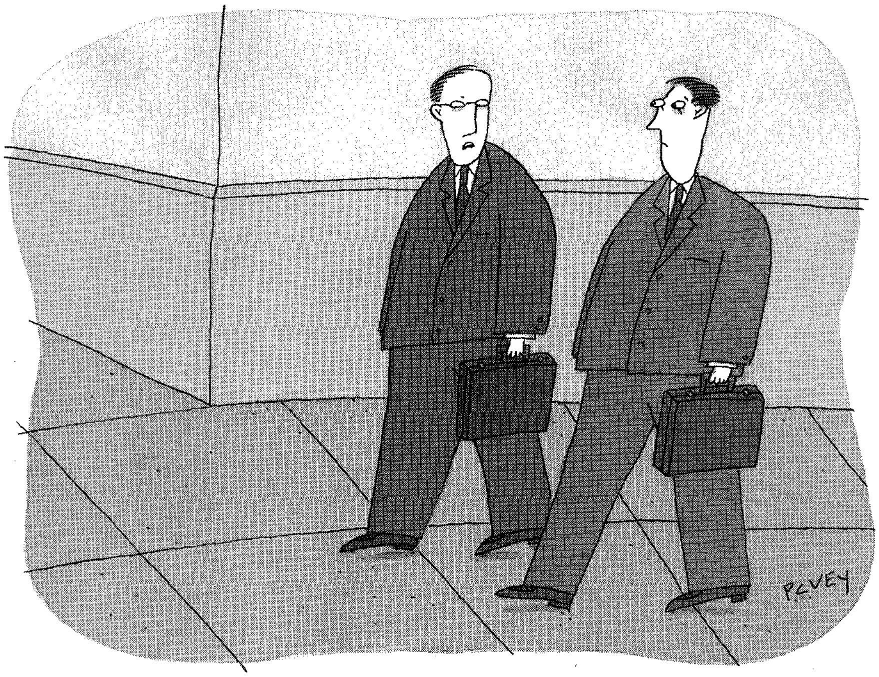
> "I saw a raging torrent."
> "As I sat down, an eagle flew by below."
> "The wind drifted dead leaves in my face."

This dark lyricism—anything but vulgar, despite the topic in question—spreads through "The Exterminating Angel," and it is good to remind oneself that a Buñuel picture can be not just needle-sharp in conception but lovely to look upon. His militant stances, especially against the established Church, have caused fans and foes alike to think of him as a man with a message; the truth is that he was a man with a medium, and the message that emerged was given infinitely more poise and flavor—the antithesis of agitprop—by that mastery. There is no showiness in Buñuel, no need for visual gymnastics; why force your cameraman to race and swoop when your most special effect is a patient, Jeevesian *froideur*? Take "Diary of a Chambermaid," with its wintry northern crispness. At one point, the libidinous cad (Michel Piccoli, with a Hitlerian dab of mustache) comes on to his scullery maid for want of anyone better. She is outside, boiling and hanging the laundry, and the combination of shrugging lust and the hot steam that rolls like breath into the frosted air, with the grace notes of chattering chickens and a thorn-crackling brazier, lends the whole scene an inescapable whiff of the medieval. It ends with a closeup, as the plump, placid maid ("I've worked all my life, sir") succumbs to his request; we see her slow tears, and Buñuel leaves us to wonder what upsets her more—these lewd advances or the rueful realization that they are the first she has ever had. All that, in a couple of minutes: so much for Buñuel's indifferent eye.

What will two months of MOMA do to our view of Buñuel? His work is so controlled that we have grown accustomed to the myth of Buñuel the serene and standoffish, hard to unearth from the stubborn ground of his movies. Working through the back catalogue and the biographies, though, I warmed to his presiding genius, and to the silvery editing that causes his films to whisk along, unburdened by indulgence. They are like murder mysteries without the dénouement; the clues are left hanging in the air, and all the suspects stay tinged with guilt. When characters in a Bergman film check into a hotel, as they do in "The Silence," they gradually accumulate a stifled agony; when Buñuel's creatures arrive at an *auberge*, as they do in "The Phantom of Liberty," they wander in and out of one another's rooms, delighted to find them unlocked. Has any great director been so unabashed at the prospect of pleasure? We should not belittle Buñuel's fierceness; nevertheless, as his own title suggests, the bourgeoisie does at least have charm and discretion on its side, as he did himself. No character in his films, however imperturbable, could begin to approach the clockwork predictability of Buñuel's own days. His routine, at the age of sixty, is described by his biographer John Baxter: up at dawn, a walk, a morning's writing, first cocktail at noon, lunch at one, and so on. Bedtime was at nine. This is as it should be; the world was never changed by *poètes maudits*. If you seek the enemy of society, look for the quiet type in a suit, or the handsome one with a drink. Buñuel devotes a whole chapter of "My Last Sigh" to the importance of bars and to "the primordial role in my life played by the dry martini." He survived on six a day.

Buñuel did not make movies about himself, but he used movies to pursue passions that could belong to no one else. It may sound strange to connect him with love, yet hoards of love accrue throughout his work, and he never ceased to invest in its promise of release. You catch it in "L'Âge d'Or," as the authorities try to tear apart the lovers who writhe in bliss on the ground; in "Belle de Jour," in the slow, liquefied smile of Deneuve, raising her head from the sheets that have been rumpled by a giant foreign client; and again in the elderly landowners of "Viridiana" and "Diary of a Chambermaid," who are felled by the onset of desire. I particularly admire the married couple in "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" who, like first-timers or newlyweds, take every opportunity to rip each other's clothes off, even deserting their lunch guests to go and make out in the bushes. If you want to pay tribute to Buñuel at the close of MOMA's season, the most loyal gesture would be not to set fire to the World Trade Center, or desecrate a church, but to have sex, as noisily as possible, in the foyer of the museum. It is a matter of great regret that no one, not even Warren Beatty, thought to offer such homage when the film won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, in 1973.

The director, needless to say, did not attend—if you think that French high society is a smiling sham, Heaven knows what you make of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Yet Buñuel did not refuse his golden statue; the thrill of smuggling his insubordination into the heart of the Hollywood beast was far too exquisite. Even if you don't buy the Buñuelian diagnosis of our common ills, you can't help pausing to acknowledge the honesty, clear as gin, with which he tells us how to behave. I like to think that it was in memory of his father, Leonardo, that Luis Buñuel strewed his fictions with fond variations on the *señorito*—the well-bred Spaniard, relaxing into age. The most dapper is Don Lope, of "Tristana," guardian and later husband of Catherine Deneuve: fastidious, chivalrous, tacitly perverse; perfectly satisfied that humanity has fallen too far to meet his high ideals; a man of the world, yet lightly disconnected from its cares; a man of means rather than ends. How one longs for such a figure to stroll, cane in hand, into the frenzied arena of recent cinema; you can picture Don Lope raising a quizzical eyebrow at the Farrelly brothers and their flailing efforts to offend. The most accomplished *señorito* of all, and also the hardest to spot, was Buñuel himself: the gentleman joker, content to sit back and watch us make fools of ourselves, and to remind us that, as Don Lope says, "the dead don't dream." Hence the noble duty of the living, the one incontestable task that unites the poet, the political activist, the housewife, the sergeant, the saint, and the maître d': Dream on. ♦



"I suffer as much as you. I just don't let it interfere with my ability to make others suffer."

THE THEATRE

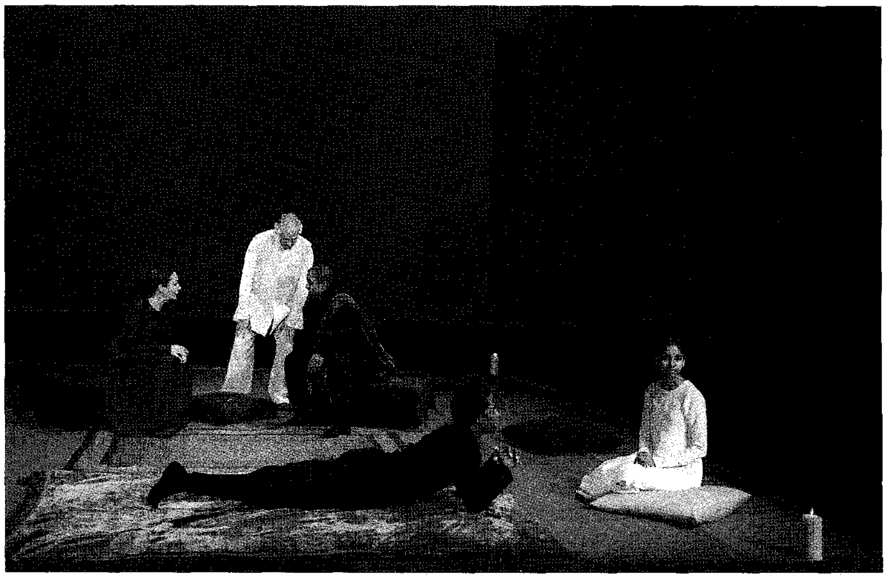
HAMLET MINCEUR

Peter Brook's new theatrical adventure.

BY JOHN LAHR

Peter Brook's theatrical mission is to wage war on the habitual, to take texts to a place where the audience can reëncounter them with both mystery and joy. "The theatre must not be dull," he writes. "It must not be conventional. It must be unexpected. Theatre leads us to truth through surprise." I first saw his masterful direction of "Marat/Sade" in 1964, and it was followed by a plethora of provocative events: "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Ik," "The Tragedy of Carmen," "The Mahabharata," and "The Man Who," to name just a few. About two weeks ago in Paris, I stood in a rain-soaked line that snaked around the block outside Brook's pleasure dome, the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, a nineteenth-century playhouse gone to gorgeous seed, where the director's newest theatrical adventure had just opened: a two-and-a-half-hour "Hamlet"—or, as he calls his souped-up, refocussed version (adapted with Marie-Hélène Estienne), "The Tragedy of Hamlet."

With its two packed balconies cantilevered, Daumier-like, above the orchestra, and its eroding terra-cotta walls stained by weather and time, the Bouffes du Nord is one of the most alluring theatres I've ever been in. Its moody architecture forcibly encourages memory and the act of reimagination. Here, under a high-ceilinged vaulted dome, the royal world of Denmark is demarcated on the black stone floor by a single orange carpet, flanked by six cushions and headed by two elevated crimson seats, for the Queen (Hamlet's mother, Gertrude) and Denmark's new king (Hamlet's stepfather, Claudius). There is also a small area beside the carpet where a musician—the subtle Toshi Tsuchitori—has laid out his range of exotic instruments. The effect is stringent and minimalist: there is nothing to capture our attention but the actors and the words they speak. The baggage with which "Hamlet" is usually freighted is discarded. "It is only by forgetting Shakespeare that we can begin to reach him," Brook says in the program notes. "We cannot always start with an idea, a concept, or a theory about the character. There are no shortcuts. The play becomes a grand mosaic, and we approach the music, the rhythm, the strangeness of the images, the alliterations, even the rhymes, with surprise, and are humbled by the discovery, because they are the necessary expressions of exceptional human creatures."



Brook's concept is anti-concept: a kind of New Critical approach to "Hamlet."

PASCAL VICTOR/MAXPPP

Brook's concept is anti-concept: a kind of New Critical approach to the drama, which insists on making meaning by sending the actors and the audience back to the language and its singular energy. There is no court (the cast of twenty-three is cut to eight), no Fortinbras, no sexuality (hardly a whiff in Ophelia or Gertrude), and no infernal hesitation. The final reversal of expectation is in Hamlet himself. He is black: the superb Adrian Lester, whose gentle, asexual integrity and swiftness of mind are well suited to the metaphysical realm that Brook's production tries to occupy. When you strip the play of class, politics, society, and neurosis, what's left is spirit: both the spirit of revenge and the spirit of Hamlet's quest for meaning.

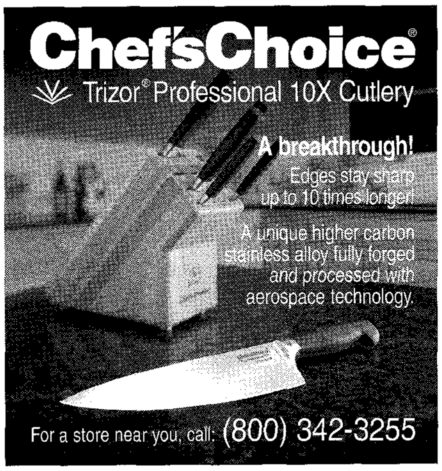
"Who's there?" is the play's first line, and Brook rightly seizes on it as a foreshadowing of "Hamlet" 's philosophical parameters. What is real? What is knowable? What is identity? These are the eternal questions that Hamlet explores as he lives his tragedy before us. In this production, those first words are spoken not by sentinels on the parapets of Elsinore at night but by the dutiful Horatio (well played by Scott Handy), who makes his way cautiously downstage in daylight and calls out beyond us to the high-cloaked hulking ghost of Hamlet's father. "Speak to me," Horatio demands, but just as the ghost turns to say something a cock's crow drowns out his words. This terrific moment sets the mood of mystery that is echoed in the last beat of the play: with the carnage of Denmark's court around him, Horatio again seems to see something. "Who's there?" Brook has him ask as he looks beyond us. Behind him, the dead bodies rise.

Brook's ending may be visionary, but his approach to the role of Hamlet is documentary. "Imagine only—as a useful trick—that the character you are working on really existed," he writes in the program notes. "Imagine that someone secretly followed him everywhere with a tape recorder, that the words he says were actually spoken by him." Treating the play as a transcription keeps the actors from investing too much of their own personality in the characters and enforces a kind of detachment—a coolness, which, from Brook's point of view, allows the words a clearer, more objective delivery. This proves to be both the production's asset and its limitation. Anyone who saw Lester's brilliant Rosalind in the Cheek by Jowl all-male production of "As You Like It" knows that he is superb at parsing Shakespearean syntax and at using his sonorous baritone to make the words land like a punch to the heart. But his Hamlet is not a prince, not a firebrand, not a neurotic, and, in his blowsy black tunic, certainly not "the glass of fashion and the mould of form." He is, more than anything, sweet reason in tights. He can act crazy, but we never, for a second, suspect that he *is* crazy. Hamlet, like Lester himself, is centered. He never doubts the ghost or his claims, and he performs his antics not to test reality but to insure the success of his master plan. This abridgment reduces the production's playing time, but it also reduces the dramatic stakes. Once Hamlet's father tells him to seek revenge, the son fairly hops to it, thereby disproving the old adage about Hamlet's melodrama—no delay, no play. Here it's a case of repay and no delay.

Without the usual context—the court, Claudius's political machinations, Gertrude's divided loyalties—the actors have no actions through which to reveal their characters. Inevitably, they become attitudes, posturing figures in a pageant who have no specific gravity and no purchase on our imagination. We can't—and don't—care about them. As Claudius, Jeffrey Kissoon, whose shaved head is meant to add menace to his congenital restraint, is heavyset but has no theatrical weight. Likewise deprived of incident, Natasha Parry can't make Gertrude's personal dilemma felt; unable to engage with Hamlet, she ends up as no more than a sounding board for a petulant son who cold-shoulders her as he sets sail for England and his probable death with a mere throwaway "Farewell, dear Mother."

The result is not so much a cool production as a wintry one, in which too many of the big moments are leached of their complexity. Occasionally, through the sheer power of his directorial ingeniousness, Brook manages to make emptiness look like content. To lend his woeful Ophelia (Shantala Shivalingappa) some energy and visual surprise, for instance, Brook moves Tsuchitori from his musical perch to center stage, turning an embarrassing acting moment into a marvellous visual and aural one. But after a while the audience grows restive. Only the graveyard scene—brilliantly performed by Bruce Myers, who has a field day as the gravedigger, after striking out as a windbag cartoon of Polonius—raises the amperage of the evening and gets the story back on track. The gravedigger leads Horatio and Hamlet in a jig around an open grave, which is being dug, as it turns out, for Ophelia. The scene plays as a kind of liberation, and triggers in Hamlet an interior seismic shift, signalled by the calm maturity and acceptance of his line "The readiness is all." When Hamlet is fatally wounded, his death seems to externalize the balance he found in life. Brook engineers a kind of Tai Chi collapse, in which Lester slowly hunkers down to a point of perfect equipoise—until he is toppled like a tree by the mere touch of Horatio's finger. In the end, we are left with a sense of Hamlet's lightness. In the uncut version, Horatio's final prayer for Hamlet asks for "flights of angels" to sing him to his rest; in this production, Hamlet himself becomes gravity's angel.

On the night that I saw "The Tragedy of Hamlet," it got five curtain calls and two resounding cascades of foot stomping. I'm told that this is the Parisian equivalent of the Wave. Unlike Andrei Serban's recent "Hamlet," at the Public, Brook's production *minceur* is no mess. It's no marvel, either. We are submerged in an extraordinary mind but not in an extraordinary world, and Brook's ambition to free the play from the fashions of its moment—"Forget Shakespeare. Forget that there ever was a man with that name. Forget that the plays have an author"—ends up imprisoning it in one of the most reductive obsessions of our own time: the sound bite. The play is condensed to the point where what's really forgotten is the human need to tell and to hear a complete story. ♦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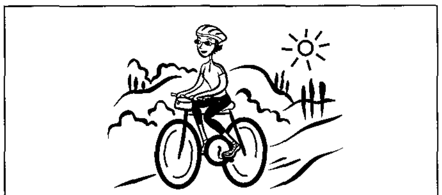
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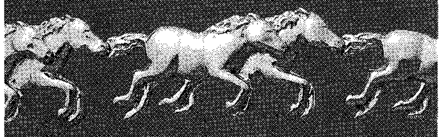
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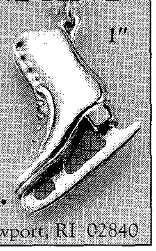

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MUSICAL EVENTS

EXTREME PIANO

Playing the unplayable.

BY ALEX ROSS

Marc-André Hamelin's piano recital at Alice Tully Hall, two weeks ago, lacked chic. The auditorium was less than half full, and the crowd had a motley appearance; it seemed to be made up equally of students, record collectors, and Canadians, of whom Hamelin is one. The students jockeyed for a good view, jumping from one front-row seat to another, like kids at a rock show. The record collectors, characteristically, were more sedate. One of them came equipped with a digital stopwatch, which he used to time the various pieces on the program. There were soft beeps at the beginning and end of each movement of Schubert's colossal B-Flat-Major Sonata.

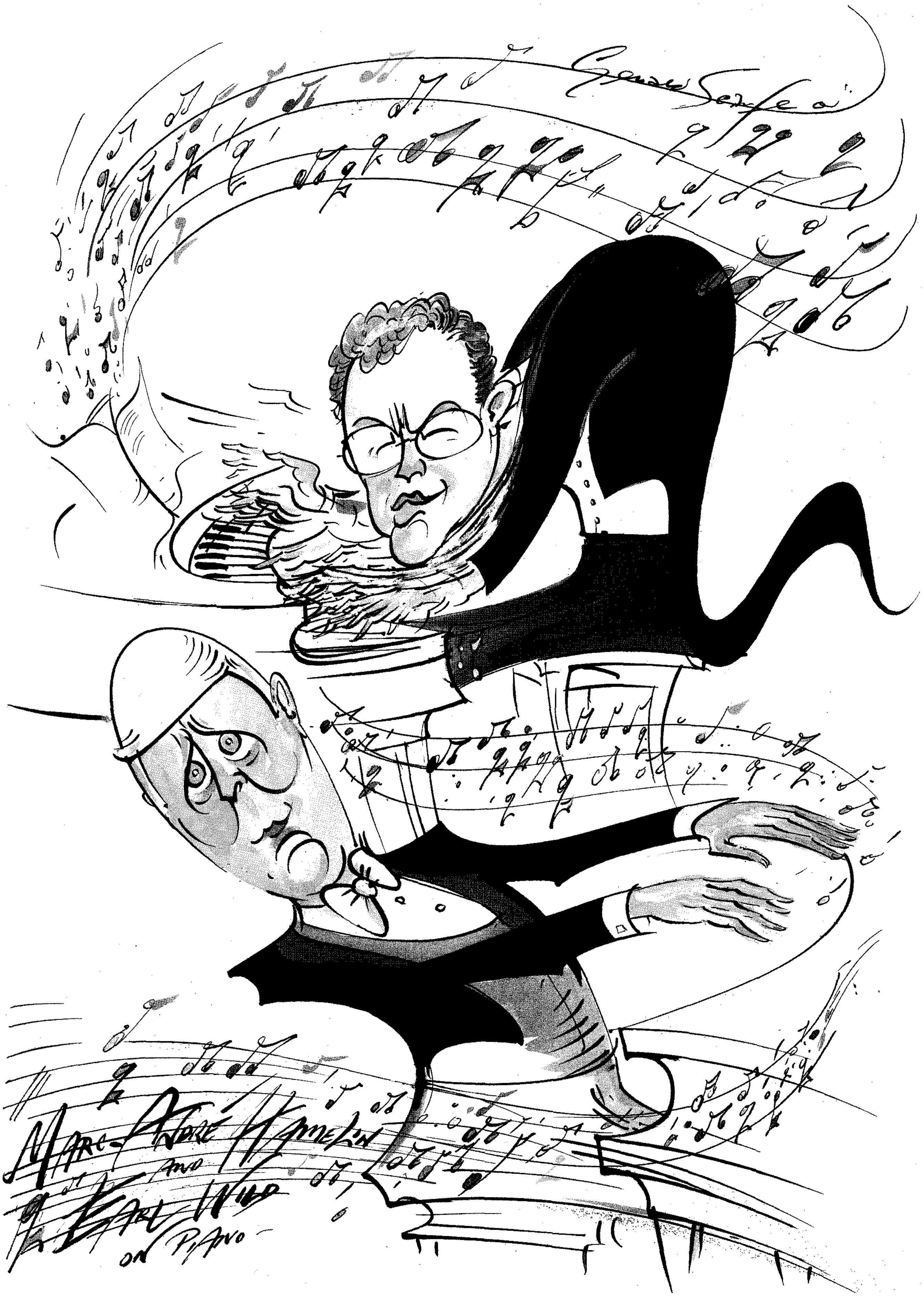
With so many seats empty, the entire audience ended up sliding over to the left side of the hall, to get a better look at Hamelin's hands. We were in on a secret: these hands are among the wonders of the musical world. No living pianist is as capable of playing more notes more clearly in a shorter span of time. The youngsters in front of me periodically shook their heads because the man was doing things that they did not believe possible. Toward the end of Scriabin's Seventh Sonata, the "White Mass," Hamelin faced a notoriously difficult rolled chord, one that contains twenty-five notes and covers five octaves. Although he did make some kind of left-to-right movement with his hands, the sound was essentially simultaneous.

Hamelin likes to put together programs that are stunning, even numbing, in their virtuosity. In this respect, he is out of step with the times; pianists are no longer supposed to pursue virtuosity for virtuosity's sake. Over the past few decades, with the rise of such intellectually formidable musicians as Alfred Brendel, Maurizio Pollini, and András Schiff, recital programs have grown steadily more sober and correct. Pianists are now at pains to point out thematic connections—to show how Schubert anticipated Schoenberg and how Schoenberg was grateful for the thought. The paragon is Pollini, who, sponsored by Carnegie Hall, has been curating a vertiginous series of choral, orchestral, chamber, and vocal programs, relatively few of which involve him playing alone.

Pianists may have sacrificed something vital in their pursuit of ultimate refinement. When Vladimir Horowitz played a random assortment of Scarlatti, Scriabin, and Sousa-Horowitz, he wasn't demonstrating connections among composers; he was telling us what they meant to *him*. One of the few surviving practitioners of the older, more charismatic school of playing is Earl Wild, who happened to give a recital at Carnegie on the night before Hamelin's appearance. Celebrating his eighty-fifth birthday, Wild had a few moments of uncertainty, but he engaged the audience as few younger pianists can. His personality came through as much in simple singing lines as in thundering double octaves. Wild has done a little of everything over the course of his career: he has hosted radio shows, accompanied Sid Caesar skits, introduced Eleanor Roosevelt with "The Star-Spangled Banner," written music himself (his latest work is a "Toccata à la Ricky Martin"). Along the way, he learned to cushion his brilliance with charm.

If Wild is the pianist as master entertainer, Hamelin, a thirty-nine-year-old native of Montreal, has the mien of a lab technician engaged in unholy experiments. Since childhood, he has been drawn to the terra incognita of the piano repertoire, to the music that others dare not touch. His father, an amateur musician, developed a peculiar love for the early-twentieth-century virtuoso Leopold Godowsky, whose salon pieces are at once flawlessly elegant and tortuously

GERALD SCARFE


Marc-André Hamelin
and
Earl Wild
on Piano

Hamelin (top) and Wild: Two super-virtuoso throwbacks to Liszt who delight at pushing the piano to its limits.

The reader's guide to laughter.

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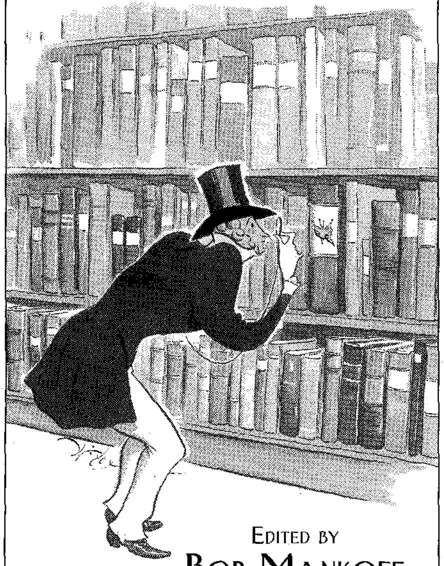

EDITED BY
BOB MANKOFF

From the stunning and the sublime to the purple and pretentious, here, in 104 drawings, are dead-on portraits and eye-opening ruminations on all things bookish, writerly, and readerly as illuminated by renowned *New Yorker* cartoonists, including Charles Barsotti, Roz Chast, Ed Koren and Victoria Roberts.

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complex. The power of the younger Hamelin's technique was evident early on, and he might have dominated the concerto circuit if he had been content to play the Rachmaninoff Third over and over. He does have a cult following, and often sells out halls in London; he is under contract to the English label Hyperion, which lets him record anything he wants. He also composes, and has written a series of études in high virtuoso style.

Hamelin embraces a kind of secret canon in the literature: the work of pianist-composers who combine digital dexterity with a love of arcana and bizarrerie. The tradition started with Liszt, whose riot-inducing showmanship went hand in hand with mystical, obscurantist tendencies. It culminated in Ferruccio Busoni, the turn-of-the-century pianist, composer, and theoretician, who wished to transgress all musical boundaries and achieved his goal with the magisterial opera "Doktor Faust." (The Met is presenting it next month.) Busoni's sound at the piano was said to be like "red flame rising out of marble"; Hamelin, at his best, gives an intimation of that effect. On a new Hyperion recording, he plays the master's huge, ambiguous Piano Concerto, making it seem both a grandiose inflation of the form and a gnomic satire of it.

Hamelin has also lavished attention on Charles-Valentin Alkan, a nineteenth-century virtuoso recluse. The story that everyone likes to tell about Alkan is that he died when a complete set of the Talmud fell on his head. (Scholars say that the tale is apocryphal, but let's not listen to them.) His music was long deemed unplayable, but it resurfaced in the sixties and seventies, when Raymond Lewenthal recorded "Funeral March on the Death of a Parrot," among other works. Hamelin, in several disks for Hyperion, has shown this composer to be more than an oddity: the controlled delirium of his "Grande Sonate" or of his flying-crockery transcription of the first movement of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto—this on a disk called "Live at Wigmore Hall"—places Alkan in a fascinating historical limbo, somewhere between romanticism and postmodernism.

The most extreme of the composer-pianists was Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, a classic English eccentric of Parsi descent. After writing some of the most bilious reviews in the history of music criticism, Sorabji retreated to a village in Dorset and covered thousands, possibly millions, of pages of manuscript paper with mad counterpoint and mystic impressions. Only a tiny fraction of his music has ever been performed, or ever will be. Hamelin is one of the few pianists who can make sense of it, but, after learning a few of the shorter pieces, he has decided that he cannot spare the months, or even years, that it would take to learn the longer ones. On December 19th, at Juilliard, a tag team of seven students steps into the breach, performing Sorabji's four-hour-long would-be masterpiece, the "Opus Clavicembalisticum" ("Piano Work").

How does Hamelin fare with composers that ordinary people have heard of? The real test on the Tully Hall program was the Schubert sonata, which sat uneasily amid dense effusions of Busoni, Medtner, and Scriabin. It is not, on the face of it, a technically difficult work. The challenge is not in the quantity of notes but in the paucity of them: in the first movement, the music seems to wander beautifully in empty space. Hamelin, who might have been expected to intrude upon the piece in some decisive way, dared to play it exactly as written. He did not mute its biting sforzandos, shorten its sudden, lingering pauses, or smooth over its irregular harmonic drift, as even the best Schubert pianists tend to do. The gently swaying main theme became a fragile thread in a forbidding labyrinth. He did not have as firm a grip on later movements of the sonata, but his performance of the first movement was the strongest—and, necessarily, the strangest—that I have ever heard.

This pianist has his limitations, chief of which is the chill that hangs over his playing. He is no Earl Wild, and even Pollini is capable of greater charm. But Hamelin possesses too much intellectual energy to be considered a mere technician. The distinctive bite of his sound and the bravado of his programming are of a piece with his urge to compose, and the samples of his music that are available on recordings show a bracing mixture of virtuoso ferocity and jazz cool. Hamelin's legend will grow—right now there is no one like him. ♦

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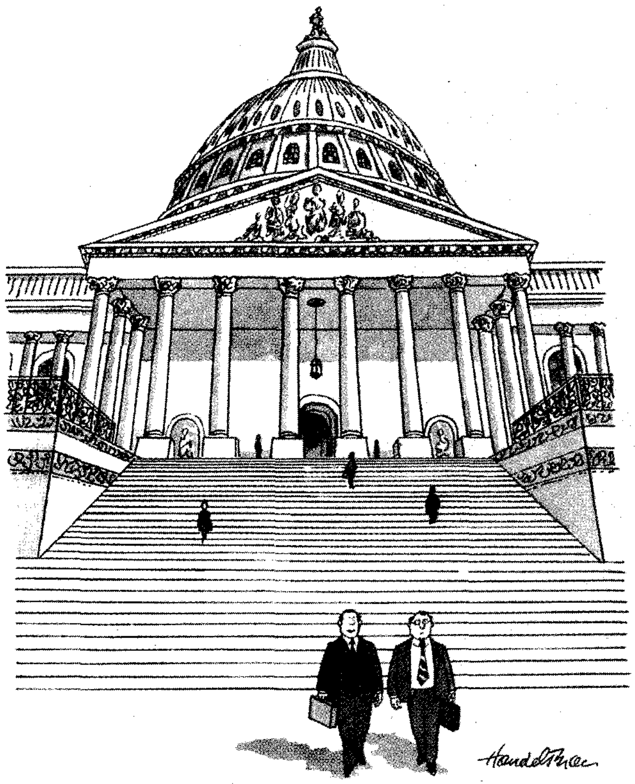

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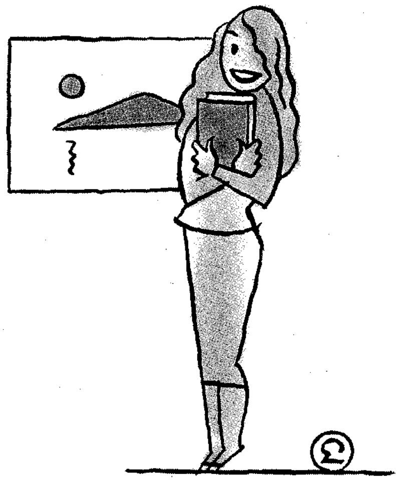

Writing in the Dark, Dancing in The New Yorker, *by Arlene Croce (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $40).* This collection, culled by Robert Cornfield, includes reviews from 1973 to 1999, covering Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Mark Morris, the Bolshoi, Baryshnikov, and, above all, Balanchine. Croce, the premier dance critic of our time, writes as an empiricist, a person looking for a good time in the theatre. When the dancing is great, she can tell us what greatness in dancing consists of. And when it is bad there is no one funnier than she.

Paris to the Moon, *by Adam Gopnik (Random House; $24.95).* Five years ago, the author and his family set out for Paris, where sugar cubes come wrapped in paper stamped with a picture of Mallarmé. In these dispatches, Gopnik reflects on, among other things, the heady social life of five-year-olds at the Ritz swimming pool, the caprices of a France Télécom fax machine, and the horrifying invasion of Barney; at the same time, his account of the trial of the collaborationist Maurice Papon reminds us that the émigré's education is not always sentimental.

The Hill Bachelors, *by William Trevor (Viking; $22.95).* In the title story, a widowed farmer's wife muses, "She hadn't thought she would be left. She hadn't wanted it. She didn't now." Many of the characters here have been, in some sense, passed over: unmarried daughters, rural Irish priests with their dwindling congregations, the eccentric family friend who's become part of the furniture but won't be brought along when the family moves. And yet when one priest tries to comfort another by saying, "You're not left bereft, you know," the quality of Trevor's attention makes us think he may be right.

Passionate Minds, *by Claudia Roth Pierpont (Knopf; $26.95).* Doris Lessing was a Communist and Ayn Rand worshipped the dollar sign; Mae West hated men but loved sleeping with them, whereas Gertrude Stein felt exactly the reverse. Pierpont, in her introduction to these critical portraits, writes, "There is hardly a woman here who would not be scandalized to find herself in company with most of the others." But all of these driven subjects, from Anaïs Nin to Zora Neale Hurston, scandalized their contemporaries, and if their personal failures were often quite spectacular their accomplishments changed our world.

The Tipping Point, *by Malcolm Gladwell (Little, Brown; $24.95).* What do the rising popularity of Hush Puppies, the decline of crime in New York City, and the spread of the flu virus have in common? They are all contagious phenomena, Gladwell asserts, and they all have a tipping point—a point at which they become an almost unstoppable force. In this "biography of an idea," Gladwell's eclectic array of evidence ranges from the ride of Paul Revere to copycat suicides in Micronesia.

Show and Tell, *by John Lahr (Overlook; $27.95).* In an introduction to these show-business profiles, Lahr suggests that style is a matter of metabolism: "If you can find the pulse of the artist, you can find the pulse of the art." This collection of intimate portraits—of, among others, Woody Allen, Roseanne Barr, David Mamet, and Bob Hope—ends, appropriately, with a memoir of the author's mother, Millie Lahr, a former Ziegfeld girl, whose last words to her son were "There's been an announcement. This house is closing. Now and forever."

Pastoralia, *by George Saunders (Riverhead; $22.95).* In these zany stories, Saunders's eccentrics watch TV shows called "The Worst That Could Happen" and live in bizarre theme parks or in subsidized apartments with a view of the FedEx plant. And yet we find them at work as self-help gurus or model cavemen—despite their obsessive awareness of their own shortcomings—doggedly enacting a warped version of the American dream.

Between Father and Son, *by V. S. Naipaul (Knopf; $26).* In 1950, the author left his home in Trinidad to attend Oxford University. The resulting exchange of letters between the author and his family gives us a palimpsest of a writer's formation; Naipaul reflects on everything from the social importance of cigarettes to the imperative of making the right contacts. The correspondence also depicts a father's far-reaching ability to cultivate his son's talent. "If you could write me letters about things and people—especially people—at Oxford, I could compile them in a book," he suggests. Fortunately, in this, if not in all matters, his son took his advice.

Matters of State, *by Philip Hamburger (Counterpoint; $24).* This serendipitous volume—containing nine Inaugural dispatches, a report from Dewey headquarters on Election Night, and one on a machine that (fallibly) predicts election outcomes—takes the long view of history. Hamburger reminds us of the country's legacy of nobler influences, like Judge Learned Hand, who wrote, "The only country which any man has a right to love is one where there is a balanced judgment, justice founded on wisdom, a free spirit and a temperate mind"—qualities the author himself brings to bear.

You've Just Been Told, *by Elizabeth Macklin (Norton; $22).* In these poems, Macklin explores what she calls "grammars of attention," presenting her own rules of usage and then, disarmingly, revising them. In a poem about a difficult father, entitled "Almost," her multiple variations on this apparently generic word—"See? I'm almost / with you again. / I'm almost angry / with you again"—reveal the central conviction of her work: that even an unprepossessing adverb carries an emotional valence.

EVER MEULEN

The Verificationist, *by Donald Antrim (Knopf; $21).* A feverish, darkly absurd farce, in which a group of catty psychoanalysts gather for dinner at a pancake house to exchange new ideas. The evening quickly turns strange, when Tom, the host, floats to the ceiling in an "emotionally disassociated state." From his unlikely station, he gives us a sharp-eyed look at the meaning of faith, eros, death, and, yes, the doughy flapjacks themselves, evoking what might happen if we all became untethered from our sense of self.

The Rose Garden, *by Maeve Brennan (Counterpoint; $23).* Brennan had a way of combining extreme silliness with an awareness of the ineffable melancholy in people's lives. The best of these stories—written in the fifties and sixties and set in Dublin, Manhattan, and a wealthy enclave on the Hudson—achieve an unexpected, Chekhovian poignance.

Sam the Cat, *by Matthew Klam (Random House; $22.95).* "What you remember about an old girlfriend is perfect. Even the horrible parts are fine." The male narrators in Klam's stories are accidents waiting to happen: one makes a dead-baby joke after his girlfriend has an abortion; another seduces a client the week of his wedding. The relentless honesty of these id-ridden antiheroes is tempered by their infectious optimism; expecting the worst from them, we wait to be surprised.

Willa Cather and the Politics of Criticism, *by Joan Acocella (Nebraska; $20).* Willa Cather wrote as though the age-old constraints faced by female novelists simply did not apply to her. "For this lordly action," Acocella observes, "she has been made to pay, mostly by women." This overview of almost a century of inadequate Cather criticism concludes with the follies of feminist academics, who chide their subject for her politics, expound portentously on her "gaps" and "fissures," and attempt to shove her into just the sort of sexually defined identity that she scorned throughout her life.

The Law of Averages, *by Frederick Barthelme (Counterpoint; $25).* This omnibus collection from the master of the low-key epiphany illuminates, with irony and awe, the surfaces of modern American life. In one story, a teacher at a junior college invites a student over to his duplex for a cookout: "She's so beautiful. Her braces are shining. On one of her front teeth there's a tiny reflection of me and of the living room behind me."

Licks of Love, *by John Updike (Knopf; $25).* This book of stories, mostly about old wives and girlfriends recollected in middle-aged tranquillity, also includes a novella—a return to the world of Harry Angstrom, Updike's unlikely alter ego. In "Rabbit Remembered," it turns out that Rabbit's untimely demise has not diminished his ability to shake up the lives of those around him. His family may not miss him, exactly, but, like the rest of us, they still can't get over him.

Ravelstein, *by Saul Bellow (Viking; $24.95).* Bellow's latest novel is a roman à clef about his close friend the late Allan Bloom, who parlayed a distaste for American philistinism into a lucrative career as an academic celebrity. But the story of the complex relationship between Abe Ravelstein and his designated Boswell is also an interrogation of the entire biographical form and the demands it makes on both subject and scribe.

Collected Works, *by Whitney Balliett (St. Martin's; $40).* Balliett's jazz criticism is filled with opinions so well considered that they carry the weight of fact. This volume balances the author's fascination with pioneers like Armstrong and Basie against his engagement with the contemporary scene, and is studded with such gems as this description of Lester Young: "His relation to the band in a solo was that of a migrating bird to a tree: he circled, perched briefly, preened, and moved on. He enhanced the band, but it did not alter him."

The New Yorker Book of Political Cartoons ($21.95) and The New Yorker Book of Technology Cartoons ($24.95) have been published by Bloomberg; The New Yorker Book of Literary Cartoons ($19.95) by Pocket Books; and Covering The New Yorker ($50) by Abbeville. Three collections of *New Yorker* articles—Life Stories, Wonderful Town, and The New Gilded Age—have been published by Random House ($26.95 each).

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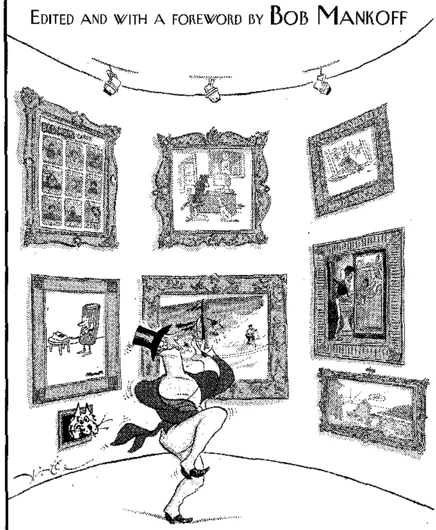

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

HIGH TIDE

"Cast Away" and "You Can Count On Me."

BY DAVID DENBY

The greatest thing about "Cast Away," an old-fashioned adventure film starring Tom Hanks and directed by Robert Zemeckis, is its startling physicality. "Cast Away," I suppose, will be called a "triumph of the human spirit," or some sort of triumph, but what truly matters in the film is not these banalities but such momentous things as the peculiar murmuring noise that the wind makes in a cave and the mournful singsong moaning of a whale just before it breaks the surface and spouts water. Sounds matter, and silence, too. The screenplay, an original, was written by William Broyles, Jr., and it features a sequence lasting a good three-quarters of an hour in which not a word is spoken. Broyles's obvious intention was to avoid telling us something that we could figure out on our own. Zemeckis doesn't muck around with extra information, either. There's little music, the special effects are minimal, and nothing morphs into anything else. To our relief, the world is just what it is—beautiful and terrible—when experienced without protection, and cinematography, the recorder of that world, returns to its old, blessed, and even redemptive function of marking the impact of one physical element on another. This straightforward, even moral relation to reality is what makes a true adventure film possible—it's what has been missing (for me, at least) from such rapturously beautiful movies as "The Matrix" and "X-Men," which have redefined adventure as something that transcends the physical. Nothing is surpassed or transcended in "Cast Away"; the movie is a mesmerizing epic of suffering, improvisation, and survival.

Hanks plays a FedEx engineer named Chuck Noland, a gregarious efficiency expert who travels around the world squeezing time out of delivery systems. In Moscow, he hectors some Russian workers more vigorously than any commissar ever did. He's the American as cheerful big-time bully, obsessed with hours, minutes, and seconds, rushing the rest of the world off its feet. The swiftly moving camera follows Noland as he jumps around Moscow, talking and exhorting, and as he returns to the FedEx hub, in Memphis, where he has a girlfriend, Kelly (Helen Hunt), who is plugged into his raillery and good humor. Noland's high spirits derive from his being on top of his game, fully in control, and Zemeckis treats his success as natural and entirely earned. The filmmaking here is fluent and easy, paced at the same rapid tempo as Hanks's assured performing rhythm.

But Noland's control quickly vanishes. Over the Pacific, a FedEx airplane he's on runs into a heavy storm, depressurizes, and pitches toward the ocean. We've seen airplane-crash scenes before, but none, I think, as agonizingly prolonged and detailed as this one. I particularly admired (as spectacle) the sight of FedEx crates careering with menacing speed around the plane as it falls and the way that, underwater, Noland's newly inflated life raft catches on a corner of the sinking wreck before, at last, breaking free. Zemeckis has more in mind than merely frightening us, as he did in his recent, cruddy horror movie, "What Lies Beneath." He wants to impress us with the chaos of destruction, the nasty certainty that if something can go wrong it *will*, as in those silent comedies in which the entire world

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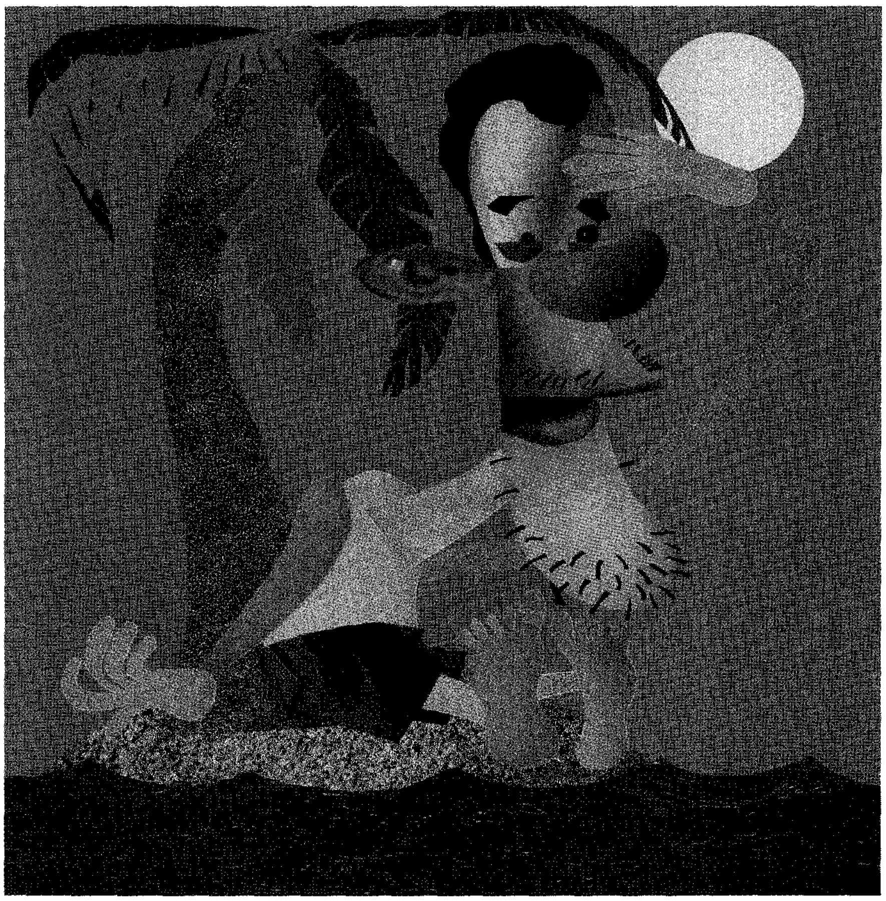
seemed to prevent Chaplin or Keaton from crossing a street. In the dark, Noland washes ashore on a barren, rocky island that offers nothing more sustaining than a jagged hill, some palm trees, and a mingy beach. And so it begins. The eliminator of time now has nothing on his hands but time. An able-bodied man in his forties, slightly overweight but strong enough, Noland has no particular skills. He's even a little clumsy and slow.

Robinson Crusoe made use of what survived from a shipwreck, and Chuck Noland, in an absurd parallel, has at his disposal the goods packed in the FedEx boxes that fell out of the sky and periodically float his way—such sweetmeats of the consumer culture as videotapes, a pair of girls' ice skates, a white volleyball that he dubs, in honor of the manufacturer, Mr. Wilson. Nearly naked, dazed, almost starving from day to day, Noland learns by accident, slashing at a coconut with a rock until the rock shears away and becomes a tool. At this point, Zemeckis slows down and becomes very methodical indeed: we need to understand how long it takes to learn something from scratch. But there's nothing of the high-school documentary here; the process is too painfully funny. Slowly, with mortifying failures, Noland re-creates the discovery of fire and draws pictures on the wall of a cave that he lives in; he turns Mr. Wilson into a totem, painting a face on the ball's surface with his own blood and talking to it as a friend. It's as if civilization, having reached something like its end, had to go back to its beginnings: the archeological past becomes the existential present, a wrenching shift that produces in Noland moods of disbelief and contempt bordering on revolt, followed by the deepest humility. The movie presents physical existence at its utmost limit of creativity and exhaustion.



Tom Hanks in "Cast Away," an adventure about the real world, not special effects.

STEPHEN KRONINGER

As much as anything else, "Cast Away" is about Tom Hanks's body, the vessel of survival. Hanks rips up his feet and hands, but he grows more adept, more graceful. Just when he reaches a certain level of competence, however, there's a fadeout and then a dismaying title—"Four Years Later"—at which point the narrative resumes, with Hanks still stuck on the island. The movie was shot in sequence, and at the narrative break Zemeckis, waiting for Hanks to transform himself into a man who has been living on a desert island for four years, took time off to make "What Lies Beneath." When he started filming again, a year later, Hanks had become lean, wiry, and tanned, with an enormous golden Mosaic beard and a wild fleece of hair. This physical transformation is one of the most moving things in recent films—a progression toward death and, at the same time, toward life. With harrowing poetic force, the movie brings us close to such physical things as the surf, which Hanks battles intimately; the wind, which plays tricks on his hearing; the great sea in all its moods of withdrawal and advance. By the end of "Cast Away," I was ready for Zemeckis to take on Melville. Zemeckis produced an obvious, ham-handed myth in "Forrest Gump," a movie about an idiot who was blessed. Here his hero is an intelligent man who is cursed—a modern hero—and then, perhaps, in the end, also blessed. The conclusion is ambiguous. A true FedEx employee, Noland delivers a package and just possibly delivers himself into a new life.

Sammy (Laura Linney), the single-mother heroine of Kenneth Lonergan's superb independent film "You Can Count On Me," lives in a small town in upstate New York, and doesn't have much to choose from in the way of men. The emotional center of her life is her vibrant screwup of a brother, Terry (Mark Ruffalo), and the movie switches into high gear when Sammy and Terry light into each other in a restaurant. A rootless wanderer, Terry resents the guilt imposed on him by his sister's love, and, in turn, Sammy blows up at him, exasperated by his habit of blaming someone else for his troubles. The two performances are remarkable: Linney, who played Jim Carrey's wife in "The Truman Show," has a fine straight nose and a cheerful and positive manner, which gives way, under pressure, to bitterly angry impulses. Ruffalo has the face of a Caravaggio boy—sensual lips, liquid eyes, a tangle of dark hair. His physical beauty makes it hard to give up on Terry as a mere loser. He's the kind of guy—we've all known Terry—who isn't stupid or malicious but just can't put things together for himself, and Ruffalo's agonizing confusions break your heart every time. ♦

THE BACK PAGE BY BRUCE McCALL

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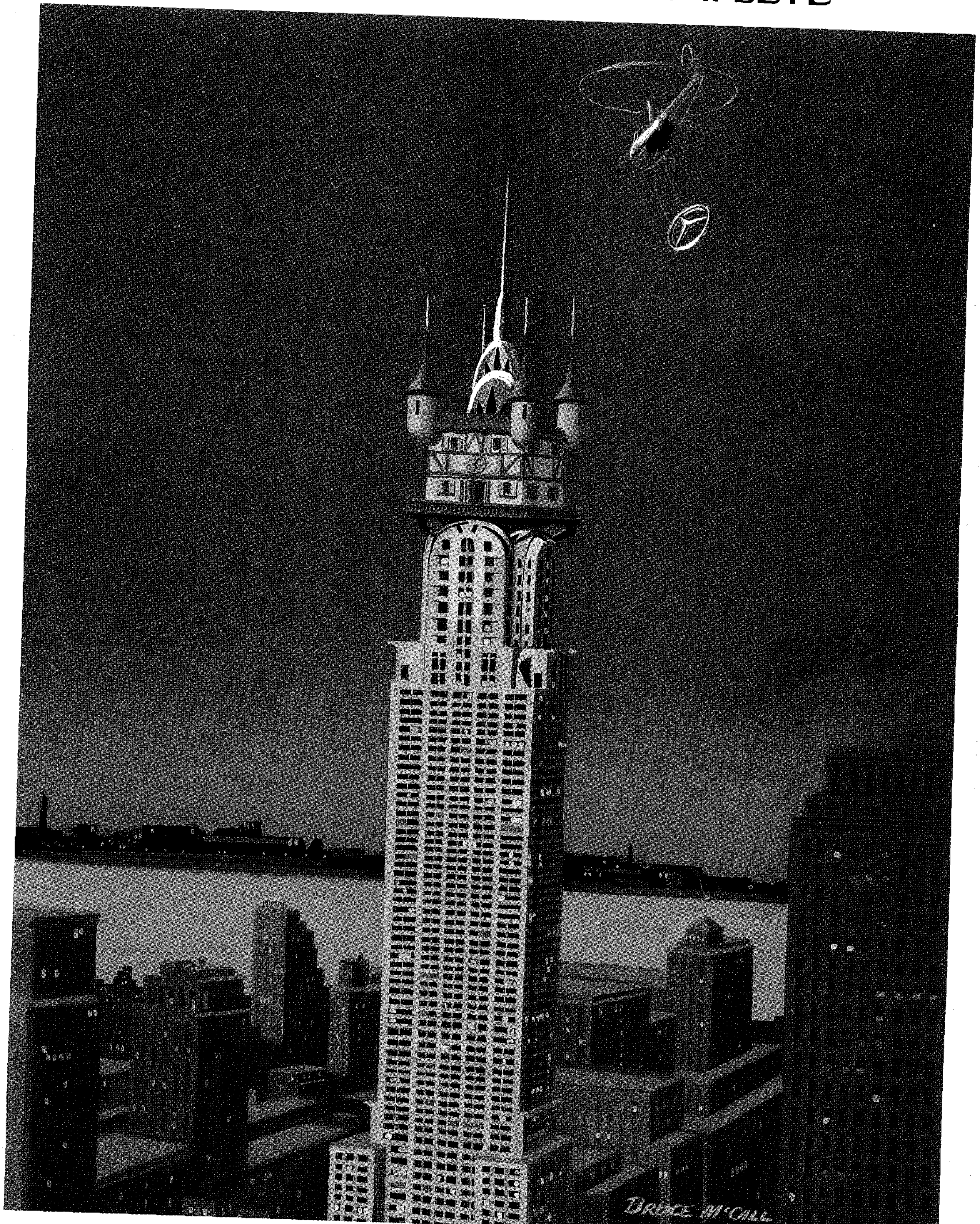

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